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Rights of indigenous peoples: follow-up to the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Economic and Social Council
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Agenda item 19 (h)
Social and human rights questions: Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the implementation of the outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in September 2014 (General Assembly resolution 69/2); an update on the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; recommendations on how to use, modify and improve existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the ends of the Declaration; and specific proposals to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions at the United Nations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council in accordance with Assembly resolution 69/2 entitled "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples". The World Conference was held in September 2014, with the purpose of sharing perspectives on and best practices for the realization of the rights of indigenous peoples, including by pursuing the objectives of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007.

2. The report responds to the requests made in paragraphs 31 and 40 of the outcome document. In paragraph 31, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues[1] and Member States, to begin the development, within existing resources, of a system-wide action plan within the United Nations system to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration, and to report to the Assembly at its seventieth session, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made.

3. In paragraph 40, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its seventieth session on the implementation of the outcome document and to submit at the same session recommendations on how to use, modify and improve existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the ends of the Declaration, ways to enhance a coherent, system-wide approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration and specific proposals to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions, building on his report on ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of indigenous peoples' representatives on issues affecting them (A/HRC/21/24).

4. The present report is informed by responses received from Member States and indigenous peoples' organizations and representatives to a questionnaire circulated in accordance with a request by the Secretariat.[2] The report also takes into account information received in the context of the fourteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, held in May 2015.

II. Implementation of the outcome document

5. In the outcome document, Member States, first and foremost, but also the United Nations system and indigenous peoples themselves commit themselves to

[1] The Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues is a network of more than 40 United Nations system entities that endeavour to strengthen inter-agency cooperation throughout the system and to promote the human rights and well-being of indigenous peoples.

[2] Two different questionnaires were distributed in English, French, Russian and Spanish. One was sent by means of a note verbale to the 193 States Members of the United Nations on 12 March 2015. The other was disseminated to indigenous peoples' organizations on 5 March 2015 using the website of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and social media, reaching, for example, more than 6,000 people on social media. Member States and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes were also asked to distribute the questionnaires among their networks. The deadline for inputs was 6 April 2015. A total of 12 responses from Member States and 425 responses from indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations were received.

multifaceted action. In order to make the outcome document fully operational, Member States, the United Nations system, indigenous peoples and other actors must pursue a wide range of measures at all levels. Such an effort will require significant attention and may also necessitate legal, institutional and programmatic reforms, as well as the development of new laws, policies and programmes.

6. The responses received from Member States and indigenous peoples' organizations noted that few specific actions had been taken in direct follow-up to the World Conference, possibly owing to the short time that had passed since the adoption of the outcome document. The small number of specific actions indicated a need to further disseminate the outcome document and to raise awareness of the World Conference and the Declaration, as well as of progress made in their implementation. Member States, the United Nations system and indigenous peoples themselves all have roles to play in that regard.

7. Some Member States have taken specific measures, including disseminating the outcome document and holding initial discussions with indigenous peoples on its operationalization. For example, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden held a meeting on 16 December 2014 on the follow-up to the World Conference, with the participation of indigenous representatives from the Arctic region, during which participants identified their key priorities for the implementation of the outcome document. In that connection, Finland had translated the outcome document into Finnish and three Sami languages and distributed it to governmental authorities and the Sami Parliament of Finland, among others. The United States of America hosted a consultation with indigenous peoples from that country on 26 February 2015 on the follow-up to the World Conference and discussed measures for the implementation of the priority provisions of the outcome document. Indigenous peoples referred to those two follow-up meetings in their responses to the questionnaire. Guatemala formed a coordinating committee, comprising various ministries that deal with indigenous issues, to disseminate the outcome document among State institutions for incorporation into their action plans. The Congo held a workshop in December 2014 to raise awareness about the outcome document of the World Conference.

8. While they did not mention specific activities initiated in follow-up to the World Conference, several Member States and indigenous peoples' organizations described current efforts at the national level with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples, consistent with the outcome document. The constitutions of various Member States contain provisions that recognize indigenous peoples and affirm their rights; El Salvador is the most recent State to have incorporated such provisions into its Constitution, which was amended in 2014 to recognize indigenous peoples for the first time. Numerous Member States have specific institutions dedicated to indigenous peoples at the national and local levels, as well as laws, policies and programmes that relate to commitments set out in the outcome document, including those relating to lands and territories, health, education; poverty reduction; violence against women and girls; the repatriation of ceremonial objects, access to justice, capacity-building, language and culture, and participation and consultations. However, some indigenous peoples' organizations indicated that gaps remained, even where relevant measures had been taken, and that Member States needed to make greater efforts to meet their commitments.

9. A number of Member States also referred to planned future activities relating to the World Conference. The Government of Mexico stated that it intended to create an inter-institutional group to follow up on its commitments set out in the outcome document. Finland planned to hold a national meeting on follow-up to the World Conference. The Plurinational State of Bolivia was developing a strategic action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples in that country. Denmark noted that, at the national level, priorities for the implementation of the outcome document had been discussed with indigenous representatives. Norway invited the Sami Parliament to assess the challenges remaining in implementing the Declaration and the relationship of those challenges to the outcome document, for future follow-up. Colombia noted that it would continue to implement measures relating to the rights of indigenous peoples, including developing, in 2015, a process for prior consultation with indigenous peoples in matters affecting them and a decree on the recognition of indigenous autonomy.

10. At the international level, several Member States emphasized the importance of including indigenous peoples' rights and priorities in the post-2015 development agenda, in accordance with paragraph 37 of the outcome document, in which Member States committed themselves to giving due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. In a joint statement presented at the fourteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, States Members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) emphasized efforts to include indigenous peoples in the current discussions on the post-2015 development agenda, including the sustainable development goals. Several States also referred to the ratification of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization, which is encouraged in paragraph 6 of the outcome document for those Member States that have not yet done so.

11. Indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations also reported on their own actions in follow-up to the outcome document, which included distributing it among their leadership, constituents and networks as well as to the media and the general public. References were also made to using the outcome document in lobbying efforts with government actors at the national level. Indigenous peoples also reported that they had organized meetings to discuss strategies for implementation, including efforts taken by the United Nations. In that connection, meetings were held[3] to discuss strategies for the implementation of specific paragraphs of the outcome document: paragraph 28, on reviewing the mandates of existing mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, in particular the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and paragraph 33, on enabling the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of United Nations bodies on issues affecting them. At the same time, various indigenous respondents noted that no actions had yet been initiated by their respective indigenous governments, communities or organizations. In that connection, many responses highlighted the need to raise awareness of the outcome document so that measures for follow-up could be carried out.

[3] The meetings included a brainstorming session in Arizona, United States, and an open-ended meeting of indigenous peoples on the follow up to the World Conference, in Geneva (see report at http://statements.unmeetings.org/media2/4657383/iitc.pdf).

12. Requests for technical and other support from the United Nations system to follow up on the outcome document were also highlighted. For example, the Government of El Salvador noted that it hoped to count on the support of the United Nations system in developing a national action plan on indigenous peoples. In addition, representatives from CELAC requested the United Nations to continue to provide support to countries in gathering disaggregated statistical data on indigenous peoples.

III. Update on the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

13. In the outcome document, the Secretary-General was requested to develop a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the Declaration (para. 31). He was asked to do so in consultation and cooperation with indigenous peoples, Member States and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

14. The Secretary-General was also invited to accord responsibility for coordinating the action plan to an existing senior official of the United Nations system. In October 2014, he appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to take up that responsibility.

15. The various agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations carry out activities that promote respect for the rights of indigenous peoples at the local, national and international levels. Many of those activities relate directly to provisions set out in the outcome document. Several United Nations agencies, funds and programmes also have specific policies and programmes relating to indigenous peoples, including regular consultations with indigenous peoples, to help to guide their work.

16. In accordance with the mandate set out in the outcome document, the system-wide action plan is a tool that will focus on the coherence of the United Nations system. The aim is to facilitate, within existing resources, a consistent system-wide approach to supporting Member States in achieving the ends of the Declaration. The request for an action plan that focuses on coherence recognizes that the United Nations system is already engaged in activities that address the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples. However, the action plan could be improved to ensure greater coherence and coordination, thus preventing duplication. It could also be more strategic and bring together the comparative strengths of the United Nations system, Member States and indigenous peoples, ultimately responding more effectively to the needs of Member States and indigenous peoples. The action plan will enable the United Nations system to deliver as one in working with Member States and indigenous peoples on achieving the ends of the Declaration.

17. In follow-up to the outcome document, the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues has established a working group to begin the development of the system-wide action plan. Since January 2015, the working group has met on a biweekly basis, with the active participation of focal points from United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

18. The development of the action plan involves active, ongoing and consistent consultations with United Nations system entities. The working group is discussing a draft set of guiding principles grounded in the Declaration, and has identified specific action areas that include the following:

(a) Providing support to Governments and State actors for the development and implementation of legal frameworks, policies, strategies or plans to achieve the ends of the Declaration;

(b) Providing support to indigenous peoples to strengthen their participation in the development, implementation and monitoring of national legal frameworks, policies, strategies and plans to achieve the ends of the Declaration;

(c) Promoting the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations forums as well as consultations with indigenous peoples on United Nations initiatives;

(d) Collecting, disaggregating and disseminating statistics on indigenous peoples;

(e) Implementing capacity-building for United Nations staff with regard to the Declaration and disseminating, and conducting training on, the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.[4]

19. A questionnaire was circulated to request feedback on the draft action areas and, more broadly, on the challenges faced in achieving the ends of the Declaration, as well as what the United Nations system can do to address such challenges. Member States and indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations reacted positively to the key action areas identified. In particular, many responses made special mention of the role of the United Nations in capacity-building and awareness-raising; its provision of technical assistance and other support to Member States for the development of legal policy and administrative measures to achieve the ends of the Declaration; and its ensuring of the participation of indigenous peoples in United Nations processes and activities affecting them.

20. Indigenous peoples' representatives and organizations and Member States also provided proposals for work by the United Nations beyond the preliminary key action areas identified in the questionnaire. For example, a number of indigenous peoples' organizations highlighted the need to monitor the implementation of the Declaration, including with respect to specific situations, especially in the areas of land, territories and resources as well as consultation and consent; promote dialogue between Member States and indigenous peoples to address outstanding issues of concern; and encourage Member States to ratify human rights treaties or to support other relevant human rights instruments. For their part, several Member States raised the need for resource mobilization and improved coordination and non-duplication among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes; and the incorporation of a gender perspective and measures to address violence against indigenous women, among other issues.

[4] Following the adoption, in 2007, of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations Development Group adopted the Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues in February 2008. The purpose of the Guidelines is to mainstream and integrate indigenous peoples' issues in processes for operational activities and programmes at the country level.

21. In the outcome document, Secretary-General was requested to develop the action plan not only through inter-agency work, but also in cooperation with indigenous peoples and Member States. The main mechanism for consultation has been online, given that the work is to be carried out within existing resources. Consultations in the context of ongoing United Nations events relating to indigenous peoples have also been organized and will continue as work progresses. Further consultations will be carried out when a draft action plan has been developed.

22. The development of the system-wide action plan is a work in progress. The Secretary-General will continue to receive and analyse input from Member States and indigenous peoples throughout the development of the action plan and will seek to take advantage of other opportunities to consult indigenous peoples, including during the sessions of the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism. In that regard, the Secretary-General encourages Member States to consult with indigenous peoples on the follow-up to the World Conference.

IV. Use, modify and improve existing United Nations mechanisms to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

A. Background

23. In paragraph 28 of the outcome document of, the Human Rights Council was invited to review the mandates of its existing mechanisms, in particular the Expert Mechanism, during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, with a view to modifying and improving the Expert Mechanism so that it could more effectively promote respect for the Declaration, including by better assisting Member States to monitor, evaluate and improve the achievement of the ends of the Declaration.

24. While the above-mentioned formulation covers, in principle, all the relevant mechanisms and mandates of the Human Rights Council, including the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, the specific focus is on the review of the mandate of the Expert Mechanism. Established as a subsidiary body in 2007 by the Council, the Expert Mechanism has until now carried out its mandate to provide the Council with thematic expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples in the manner and form requested by the Council, mainly in the form of studies and research-based advice.

B. Input received

25. While the work of the Expert Mechanism has been valuable and commended, including by the Human Rights Council, the need to strengthen its work and impact has been widely recognized, as reflected in the outcome document , as well as in the responses received from Member States and indigenous peoples to the questionnaire and during consultations.

26. Several responses received emphasized the expectation of an enhanced mandate to assist Member States in monitoring, evaluating and improving the implementation of the Declaration, in addition to carrying out studies on specific

human rights issues affecting indigenous peoples. It was stressed that a revised mandate should complement those of the Special Rapporteur and the Permanent Forum. Furthermore, be conducted with the effective participation of indigenous peoples.

27. In addition, the responses stressed the need to allocate financial and human resources commensurate with the goals of the revised mandate to enable the Expert Mechanism to carry out its work effectively. Several comments also stressed that, while the mandate of the Expert Mechanism should be expanded, it should remain a unique subsidiary body of the Human Rights Council and that certain elements of its current mandate should be maintained, including the preparation of studies. Several comments also underlined that the sessions of the Expert Mechanism should continue to serve as a space for constructive and interactive dialogue between States and indigenous peoples.

28. The following proposals for specific ways in which the Expert Mechanism could assist Member States to monitor, evaluate and improve the implementation of the Declaration have been put forward by some Member States and indigenous representatives:

(a) Preparing reports on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, including through a mechanism that would enable Member States and indigenous peoples to submit information on a voluntary basis;

(b) Assisting Member States in monitoring and evaluating progress and overcoming obstacles to better achieve the ends of the Declaration, including in relation to the implementation of relevant country-specific recommendations concerning indigenous peoples issued by such existing human rights mechanisms as the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review and the special procedures Human Rights Council as well as those of the treaty-monitoring bodies;

(c) Supporting Member States and indigenous peoples in the preparation of national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the Declaration, including through country-specific advice;

(d) Engaging actively with the universal periodic review process and with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and human rights treaty bodies, as well as playing an active role in assisting States in implementing recommendations regarding indigenous peoples issued by those mechanisms;

(e) Issuing general observations and interpretations regarding the provisions of the Declaration,

(f) Collecting and disseminating information regarding good practices for achieving the ends of the Declaration;

(g) Providing technical assistance and expert advice to Member States, indigenous peoples and the private sector to help them to overcome obstacles to achieving the ends of the Declaration;

(h) Seeking, receiving and considering communications and other information from Member States, indigenous peoples and other sources on matters of concern for the rights affirmed in the Declaration.

29. Some proposals from Member States and indigenous peoples suggested the establishment of a capacity-building function for the Expert Mechanism to assist

States, indigenous peoples national human rights institutions and other relevant bodies in achieving the ends of the Declaration. Such a function would include the facilitation of dialogue as well as the provision of support and advice to improve national legislation and policy with regard to the rights of indigenous peoples, including national action plans and legislative, policy and administrative measures. Furthermore, some respondents suggested the enabling of the Expert Mechanism to send and receive communications on specific cases and to carry out country visits, keeping in mind the need to ensure complementarity with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

30. Proposals regarding the composition of the Expert Mechanism ranged from increasing the number of expert members to involving indigenous peoples more closely in the appointment process. The expertise and qualifications of the candidates is of critical importance in the selection of experts.

C. Recommendations

31. The work of the Expert Mechanism, in providing thematic expertise on the rights of indigenous peoples to the Human Rights Council, has been valuable. It is necessary, however, to strengthen the impact of the work of the Expert Mechanism, especially by taking into account the specific measures that have been put forward by Member States and indigenous representatives (see para. 28).

32. In particular, to better achieve the ends of the Declaration, the Expert Mechanism could be mandated to assist Member States in monitoring and evaluating progress, including in relation to the implementation of relevant thematic and country-specific recommendations issued by human rights mechanisms and bodies concerning indigenous peoples. The modified mandate should also enable the Expert Mechanism to engage in direct communications and constructive dialogue with interested Member States and indigenous peoples, as appropriate.

33. As the Human Rights Council pursues the mandate review and considers various proposals, it is important to continue close engagement with indigenous peoples and to take into account the mandates of the human rights mechanisms, including those of the Special Rapporteur and the Expert Mechanism. Such an inclusive approach will help to avoid unnecessary duplication and will facilitate specific human rights improvements for indigenous peoples, in line with the Declaration and the outcome document.

V. Enabling the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions

A. Background

34. Although indigenous peoples' representatives are able to participate in their own right in United Nations processes relating to indigenous issues, namely the sessions of the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism, they often face difficulty in gaining access to other United Nations bodies and processes that do not

explicitly address the issues of indigenous peoples, but can have an impact on their rights. In such key bodies as the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council, indigenous peoples' representative bodies are able to take part in meetings only through non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

35. Indigenous peoples' organizations and some Member States have pointed out that consultative status as a non-governmental organization with the Economic and Social Council is not appropriate for indigenous peoples' representative bodies, many of which have their own government or governance institutions. Furthermore, many indigenous peoples' organizations and institutions are distinct from non-governmental organizations because of their relationship with the peoples and communities that they represent. That relationship has led some Member States to include indigenous representatives in their delegations; however, such inclusion does not address the specific status of indigenous peoples' representative bodies.

36. In recognition of that challenge, the Heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives of Member States committed themselves, in the outcome document, to considering at the seventieth session of the General Assembly ways to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, including any specific proposals made by the Secretary-General in response to the request made in paragraph 40 of the outcome document.

37. In 2012, following a request from the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General submitted a report on ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of indigenous peoples' representatives on issues affecting them (A/HRC/21/24). In addition to providing an overview of current modalities for indigenous peoples' participation in various United Nations bodies, the Secretary-General outlined possible ways forward regarding the development of a procedure to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the United Nations, and highlighted issues for further consideration.

38. The Secretary-General also set out a series of considerations for the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the United Nations, namely:

(a) Criteria for determining the eligibility of indigenous peoples' representatives for accreditation as such;

(b) Nature and membership of the body to determine the eligibility of indigenous peoples' representatives for accreditation;

(c) Details of the process, including the information required to be submitted to obtain accreditation as an indigenous peoples' representative;

(d) Procedures that will make the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives meaningful and effective.

B. Good practices

39. Several current practices within the United Nations regarding indigenous peoples' participation have been identified as good practices by both indigenous peoples and Member States. They include the participation of indigenous peoples during the negotiation of the Declaration and at the sessions of the Permanent

Forum, the Expert Mechanism and the high-level commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration, as well as support for the participation of indigenous peoples at those and other United Nations meetings through the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples.

40. Some Member States and indigenous peoples' organizations also commented positively on the modalities for the participation of indigenous peoples in the World Conference. In that process, one Member State representative and one indigenous representative, appointed by the President of the General Assembly, worked together to facilitate discussions on the format and organizational arrangements of the World Conference. In addition, two Member States and two indigenous advisers were appointed to support the President in the preparation of the outcome document. That approach helped to ensure that indigenous peoples could contribute to the process.

41. Other good practices are those that build the capacity of indigenous peoples to engage with the United Nations system, including the Indigenous Fellowship Programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

C. Input received

42. Some indigenous peoples' organizations put forward a proposal for the creation of a new category of observer status that would allow indigenous peoples' representative institutions to participate more effectively in the United Nations. According to the proposal, indigenous peoples' representatives would be selected in accordance with their own procedures.

43. The criteria for determining which indigenous peoples' institutions would qualify for such status and the procedures for applying for and granting such status would also need to be addressed. While self-identification has been one of the main criteria for accrediting indigenous peoples' organizations for the sessions of the Permanent Forum and the Expert Mechanism, some Member States noted in their replies to the questionnaire that additional requirements for obtaining any new status should be introduced. Some Member States suggested that specific status should be granted to indigenous representatives and institutions that were constitutionally, legally or politically acknowledged in their countries. There are also calls for arrangements to consider granting such status to indigenous peoples' representative bodies that meet certain criteria, while not being legally recognized at the national level.

44. Regarding the process of accreditation of indigenous peoples' representatives and the body that would oversee it, several possibilities were put forward, ranging from a hybrid committee of Member States and indigenous peoples to consider applications, to the formation of a working group of the General Assembly on indigenous peoples' participation.

45. In considering modalities that would better accommodate the specific status of indigenous peoples' representative bodies, it would be useful to draw from positive practices that have been established for other categories of participants in certain contexts. For example, the way in which the Human Rights Council has accommodated the contributions of national human rights institutions in its sessions could inform and inspire future discussions on enhancing indigenous peoples' participation. National human rights institutions that comply with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of

human rights (the Paris Principles), can, for example, make oral statements under all substantive agenda items and participate through video messages in plenary debates of the Council.

46. In parallel with the consideration of formal arrangements for advancing indigenous peoples' participation, it is important to further develop informal ways of including indigenous peoples in other United Nations processes and enhancing dialogue between indigenous peoples and Member States. Informal briefings and channels can also be helpful in the context of the intergovernmental work of the General Assembly and its main committees. In that context, the proposals that have been made regarding meetings between Committee chairs and civil society and briefings by the President of the Assembly, for example, could also be considered, mutatis mutandis, in relation to indigenous peoples (see, for example, "Report to the President of the Sixtieth General Assembly on the United Nations: the relationship between Member States and civil society, including non-governmental organizations".[5]

D. Proposals

47. The Secretary-General reiterates observations made in his 2012 report on ways and means of promoting participation at the United Nations of indigenous peoples' representatives on issues affecting them (A/HRC/21/24), in which he outlined possible ways forward regarding the development of a procedure to enable the participation of indigenous peoples' representatives in the United Nations, and issues for further consideration.

48. The Secretary-General encourages Member States to move forward on developing measures to enable the effective participation of indigenous peoples' representatives and institutions in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, through representatives chosen in accordance with their own procedures.

49. In that process, Member States could look to current practices within the United Nations regarding indigenous peoples' participation that have been identified as good practices by both indigenous peoples and Member States. Member States should draw from positive practices that have been established for other categories of participants in certain contexts, for example, the accommodation of contributions by national human rights institutions in the sessions of the Human Rights Council.

50. As a next step, the President of the General Assembly may wish to consider appointing co-facilitators or advisers, including indigenous representatives, to lead an open-ended consultation process among, inter alia, Member States, indigenous peoples' representatives and existing mechanisms of the United Nations on the possible procedural and institutional steps and selection criteria necessary to enable indigenous peoples' participation at the United Nations. Indigenous peoples should be actively involved in the process of determining their participation, in partnership with Member States, before a procedure is finalized and adopted by United Nations intergovernmental bodies.

[5] Available from www.un.org/ga/president/60/summitfollowup/060707e.pdf.

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Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits: follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (New York, 20 and 21 April 2015)

I. Introduction

1. The special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was held in New York on 20 and 21 April 2015. The overall theme of the meeting was "Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of financing for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda". The meeting featured an opening address by the Secretary-General, a keynote address by the Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, Ali Babacan, and statements on behalf of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD, the joint Development Committee of the World Bank and IMF, the International Monetary and Financial Committee of IMF and WTO.

2. The meeting was organized around a ministerial segment, statements by intergovernmental representatives and three thematic debates, each of which was followed by an interactive discussion. The ministerial segment focused on the theme "World economic situation and prospects". The thematic debates were organized around the themes of "Current challenges and emerging opportunities for mobilization of financial resources and their effective use for sustainable

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development on the road to Addis Ababa"; "Renewed global partnership for development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda"; and "Follow-up and the way forward: enhancing the role of the Economic and Social Council". The participants had before them a note by the Secretary-General (E/2015/52), in which background information was provided and possible questions for discussion under the above four themes were suggested.

3. The meeting was preceded by preparatory consultations and meetings between the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council and the executive boards of the World Bank and IMF, in addition to intergovernmental representatives and senior management of WTO and UNCTAD.

4. Speakers at the ministerial segment included five at the ministerial level and one European Commissioner. A significant number of Executive Directors and Alternate Executive Directors of the Boards of the World Bank and IMF, as well as senior staff of these institutions and other institutional stakeholders, including WTO and UNCTAD, attended the meeting. Also participating were high-level government officials in the areas of finance, foreign affairs and development cooperation, in addition to senior staff of organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations, including the major institutional stakeholders. Representatives of civil society and the business sector also participated actively.

II. Opening of the special high-level meeting

5. The opening of the meeting featured statements by the President of the Economic and Social Council, Martin Sajdik (Austria), and the Secretary-General.

6. The President, in his statement, welcomed the participants to the meeting, noting that it was being held at a crucial juncture in the lead-up to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Addis Ababa from 13 to 16 July 2015. He underlined that past regional and global financial and economic crises had shown that decades' worth of development gains could come undone in a matter of a few years. In that context, he highlighted the need to work towards a more cohesive and resilient global economic system. In 2015, the world economy had begun on a weak note, following subdued growth in 2014. While it was expected to strengthen over the coming two years, it had been hampered by major geopolitical tensions and humanitarian crises. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, remained a key policy challenge worldwide, posing risks not only to the economic recovery in the short run but also to potential long-term growth. To mitigate those challenges, he called for strengthened international policy coordination and cooperation. In particular, macroeconomic policies worldwide should be aligned towards supporting robust and balanced growth, creating productive jobs and maintaining economic and financial stability in the long run. He noted that the mobilization of both public and private resources at the national level would be at the heart of financing sustainable development and meeting the sustainable development goals. At the same time, traditional development cooperation, and official development assistance in particular, would continue to play an important role, especially for countries with special needs. He stressed the need for a new global partnership for development, leveraging the strengths of all actors, including civil society, the private sector, local governments and national parliaments. That partnership should be based on equity, cooperation and

accountability, taking into account national realities and differentiated needs, capacities and levels of development. To be effective, it would require a strengthened and more robust monitoring and accountability mechanism, including a strong financing for development follow-up process.

7. In his statement, the Secretary-General said that the current meeting was an important step in the preparation for the Conference in Addis Ababa , as well as for the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, to be held in New York in September 2015 and the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in in Parise from November to December 2015. The strong engagement of the major institutional stakeholders and of the civil society and business sector representatives illustrated the unprecedented level of cooperation that had emerged during the common efforts to formulate a post-2015 development agenda. The Conference in Addis Ababa would provide a chance to devise a new international financial framework that would be predictable and effective in achieving sustainable and inclusive development. He outlined three key elements of a successful outcome in Addis Ababa: a cohesive and holistic financing framework for sustainable development; specific deliverables, in particular in crucial areas such as infrastructure, agriculture, social needs and support for small and medium-sized enterprises; and a strong follow-up process to ensure that no country would be left behind. He highlighted the need to tap into all sources of development finance: national and international, public and private. The zero draft of the outcome document emphasized the importance of combating illicit financial flows, including through national reforms and international tax cooperation. While the draft welcomed the work of the Group of 20 and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in that area, it also noted that those initiatives should be complemented by more inclusive deliberations at the United Nations to ensure that they benefited all countries, including the least developed countries. The draft stressed the need for continued official development assistance and the importance of reversing the declining trend of aid to least developed countries. It also emphasized the important role of development banks, private finance, technology, capacity-building and incentives to promote greater private investment in sustainable development. The zero draft also highlighted the need for an equitable multilateral trading system, sustainable debt and more inclusive global governance for sustainable development. He underlined that the financing needs for sustainable development were enormous. Success would rely on a revitalized and stronger global partnership for development.

8. In his keynote address, Mr. Babacan shared the views of the Group of 20 under the Turkish Presidency on the following: the global economic outlook, the Group's priorities at that juncture and the perspective and work of the Group on 20 on development. He observed that there was still no sustained recovery in the global economy, efforts to promote growth notwithstanding. He noted, however, the positive signals from major developed economies, including the eurozone, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The picture was more nuanced in emerging market economies, although they still accounted for more than two thirds of the global growth. He stressed that the challenges to the global economic outlook persisted, especially the recent volatility in exchange rates, prolonged low inflation and low yields. He called for important reforms in the areas of labour market, social security, investment and

human capital. He also presented the three priorities of the Group of 20 Turkish Presidency for 2015. The first was inclusiveness. The Turkey would emphasize small and medium-sized enterprises, which generated up to 80 per cent of employment in some countries. He announced the launch of a world forum on small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as a new "Women 20" engagement group to enhance the role and effectiveness of women in business. He emphasized the efforts of Turkey to ensure that the interests of low-income countries would be fully taken into account in the work of the Group. The second priority area was implementation. Turkey would focus on the implementation of the more than 1,000 structural reforms committed by the States members of the Group countries. If implemented, these reforms could raise global growth by 2 per cent higher than normal by 2018. The third priority area was investment. The States members of the Group were expected to present specific and concrete investment plans at the summit, to be held in Antalya on 15 and 16 November 2015. He highlighted the importance of private resources for public investment and the need for standardization of public-private partnerships. He elaborated on the efforts of the Turkey to make the greatest possible contribution to the agenda on international development in 2015. He underscored the linkages between the proposed sustainable development goals and the main elements of the Group's development agenda, notably infrastructure, national resource mobilization, financial inclusion and remittances, food security and nutrition, and human resources development. He also indicated the aim to develop an energy access action plan with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa. The very first meeting of the Group's 20 energy ministers would be held in Istanbul in October 2015. Lastly, he called for a new era of work between humanitarian and development sectors, especially in relation to humanitarian financing. He said that the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May 2016, should provide a unique opportunity to address those issues.

III. Ministerial segment on theme 1: "World economic situation and prospects"

9. The morning session featured a ministerial segment on the theme of "World economic situation and prospects", followed by an interactive discussion. The segment featured statements by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Economic Integration and Reforms of Armenia, Vache Gabrielyan; the Minister of Finance and Public Credit of Colombia, Mauricio Cárdenas; the Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development of the European Union, Neven Mimica; the Minister for Finance of Sweden, Magdalena Andersson; the Minister of Development, Investment and International Cooperation of Tunisia, Yassine Ibrahim; the State Minister for Finance and Economic Development of Ethiopia, Abraham Tekeste; and the President of the Eurasian Economic Club of Scientists, Murat Karimsakov.

10. Mr. Gabrielyan noted that there was still an important role for public finance in development, but that that role was evolving. One of the most prominent options, especially for least developed countries, was private-public partnerships. Armenia was actively using the potential of those partnerships with the help of donors, especially the World Bank. One of the most promising possibilities of overcoming the supply bottlenecks in infrastructure for Armenia, a landlocked country, was to promote a more efficient use of existing infrastructure. Recognizing the important

role of the Economic and Social Council in preparing for the post-2015 agenda and the Conference in Addis Ababa, he expressed the readiness of Armenia to engage actively in the discussions to make sure that 2015 would become a year of opportunity.

11. Mr. Cárdenas stressed the success story of Colombia with regard to economic and social development. He indicated that the country had an investment rate of 30 per cent and had managed to decrease poverty considerably from a high of 40 per cent in 2009. However, falling commodity prices and expected increases in interest rates in the United States presented major threats to growth in many Latin American countries. The erosion of the tax base was one of the most important challenges for the mobilization of national resources for development. Tax revenues accounted for 22 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in Latin American countries and 34 per cent in developed countries. He underscored the importance of capacity development, efforts to combat tax evasion, promoting the exchange of information among developing countries and strengthening national development banks. He reiterated the commitment of Colombia to ensuring a successful outcome in Addis Ababa to provide the financing for the sustainable development goals in the post-2015 period.

12. Mr. Mimica reiterated that the European Union was committed to advancing global growth and prosperity and to providing more official development assistance. He highlighted that the Union accounted for 20 per cent of global GDP, but for more than half of global official development assistance. Nevertheless, the efforts by the Union were insufficient and he called on all providers to make clear commitments in line with their economic strength. The Union was the world's leading funder of the Aid for Trade initiative. It also provided significant grants and unilateral trade preferences. The Everything but Arms initiative provided free access to the Union market for all products from least developed countries, except arms and ammunition. He insisted that the benefits of global progress should be shared widely, noting that inequality not only compromised human dignity but also had a negative impact on growth potential. He underscored that the financing for development and post-2015 tracks should merge into a single overarching agenda, supported by a solid monitoring mechanism to ensure credibility, consistency and impact.

13. Ms. Andersson highlighted two main challenges: climate change and gender equality. Given that the fall in oil prices discouraged a move away from carbon-based fuel, she underlined that the need to introduce carbon taxes or restrictions on emissions was greater than before. She emphasized that Sweden had 20 years of experience with a carbon tax and that it had the highest carbon tax in the world. Since 1991, the GDP of Sweden had increased by 60 per cent, whereas carbon emissions had dropped by 20 per cent. She used those data to illustrate that it was possible both to enjoy growth and to reduce emissions. She also stressed that promoting gender equality would increase growth potential. She highlighted that official development assistance was an important but limited source of development financing and that it should be used to unleash the potential of other financing sources. She reiterated the commitment of Sweden to meet the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of GNI, and to meeting and exceeding 50 per cent of such assistance to least developed countries. National resource mobilization would play a key role. In that respect, she welcomed the proposals in the zero draft

outcome document for the Conference in Addis Ababa to increase tax revenues progressively.

14. Mr. Ibrahim shared his impressions of the discussions on commodity prices that were held at the spring meetings of IMF and the World Bank Group in Washington, D.C., from 17 to 19 April 2015. He raised some particular issues, including reforms in the energy sector and the elimination of energy subsidies. Over the past four years, Tunisia had launched an ambitious programme of reforms to improve competitiveness and to make the country more attractive to international investors. At the same time, the Government was working with the United Nations to meet national economic and social goals. He used that opportunity to thank all international organizations, especially the United Nations, for their support. He indicated that the Government was working on a five-year plan for the period 2016-2020.

15. Mr. Tekeste pointed out that the recovery of the world economy was not proceeding at the desired pace and that growth might be moderate in the coming years. New challenges were beginning to emerge in different parts of the world. The commitment of the international community to the transformative development agenda was extremely important during that period. The effective implementation of the sustainable development goals required all sorts of financing: private and public, national and international. At the national level, the necessary environment needed to be created for the meaningful participation of the private sector. At the international level, he underlined that official development assistance or international public finance remained important, in particular for least developed countries, to attain the goals. He emphasized that international financial and trade institutions had a much greater role to play in future development, especially in ensuring a stable global financial and trading system, providing support for the least developed countries and making the necessary resources available for infrastructure development. Beyond financing bankable projects, those institutions should continue to provide support for national resource mobilization, capital market development, foreign direct investment, capacity-building and technical assistance.

16. Mr. Karimsakov shared the results of the first and second world anti-crisis conferences in Astana. The first was held in May 2013 with 3,000 experts and officials from 104 countries, including ministers of finance and heads of central banks. The second was held in May 2014 with the participation of 4,000 delegates from 136 countries. The goal was to work out the World Anti-Crisis Plan that had been presented at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

17. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised: respecting the policy space of national Governments in the area of public finances; reforming international financial institutions and the global monetary system to ensure the full representation of developing countries; meeting the official development assistance targets of 0.7 per cent of GNI, with at least 0.20 to 0.25 per cent of GNI allocated to least developed countries; making global fiscal policy more countercyclical and more equitable; and designing new development indicators other than GDP, such as multidimensional poverty. It was also noted that the current levels of official development assistance were insufficient to achieve the sustainable development goals, especially for some recipient countries.

IV. Statements by institutional stakeholders

18. The morning session concluded with statements by the Vice-President, Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD, Luis Manuel Piantini Munnigh (Dominican Republic); Corporate Secretary and President's Special Envoy, World Bank Group, Mahmoud Mohieldin; Deputy Secretary of IMF and Acting Secretary of the International Monetary and Financial Committee Calvin McDonald; and Deputy Director-General, WTO, Yi Xiaozhun.

19. Mr. Munnigh reiterated the important role of trade as a key enabler and means to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Open, universal, rule-based and non-discriminatory participation in international trade could deliver key benefits to developing countries. He underlined that UNCTAD had developed an action plan for private investment in the sustainable development goals, with some priority packages: a new generation of investment promotion strategies and institutions; investment incentives oriented towards the goals; regional sustainable development goals investment compacts; new forms of partnership for sustainable development goals investment; enabling innovative financing mechanisms and a reorientation of financial markets; and changing the global business mindset and developing goals investment expertise.

20. Mr. Mohieldin noted that, in April 2015, participants in the joint World Bank/IMF Development Committee meeting had welcomed the participation of the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the co-facilitators of the post-2015 development agenda and the preparatory process for the Conference in Addis Ababa, a delegation of high-level officials from the United Nations, and the heads of the multilateral development banks. Ministers had acknowledged that achieving the sustainable development goals would require a transformational vision that built on the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals and combined all potential sources of financing, including more effective and catalytic use of official development assistance, in particular for the poorest; strengthening national resource mobilization, promoting sound public financial management and addressing the challenge of illicit finance; promoting private finance and investment; and coordinating action on global issues. The Committee had recognized that achieving the sustainable development goals would also require countries to deal with the challenges and consequences of climate change and natural disasters. The members had commended the World Bank Group's commitment to mainstreaming low-carbon development and disaster risk management while maintaining focus on its poverty eradication mandate, and further encouraged efforts and financing to contribute to the success of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris in December 2015. The Committee had highlighted the recent plunge in oil prices and noted the significant real income shift from oil exporters to oil importers, with a net positive effect on growth in developing countries, which created challenges for policymakers in oil-exporting countries, but also provided a favourable environment for subsidy and tax reforms for more inclusive and sustainable growth.

21. Mr. McDonald focused on the role of IMF in supporting countries in a global economy characterized by uneven growth, declining oil prices, sharp variations in exchange rates and market volatility. With regard to fiscal policy, he pointed out that IMF would continue to provide advice on how to make fiscal policy supportive of

short-term and long-term growth; calibrate fiscal packages and reduce public debt overhangs; and manage fiscal risks. With regard to monetary policy, IMF would continue to assess the impact of asynchronous or timing differences in their implementation. That included how to strengthen the effectiveness of macroeconomic policy transmission, manage disruptive exchange rate movements, mitigate financial stability risks and capital flow volatility, and respond to falling commodity prices and disinflationary pressures. IMF would deepen macrofinancial analysis and support members in addressing financial stability risks, and advise on addressing debt overhangs, especially in the eurozone. It would continue to identify and analyse macrocritical structural reforms to make growth sustainable, job-rich and inclusive, leveraging the expertise of other institutions. Lastly, he underscored that the implementation of the 2010 IMF quota and governance reforms remained a priority. IMF was fully committed to working expeditiously with its members to pursue an interim solution to make meaningful progress in the key areas of the reforms.

22. Mr. Yi stated that WTO remained fully committed to the discussion of the post-2015 agenda and the financing for development process. He said that, as WTO celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2015, the organization and its rules governing world trade had proved their worth in the context of the Millennium Development Goals. He outlined some key areas where WTO should play an important role in the post-2015 development agenda, such as the Agreement on Trade Facilitation, the implementation of the rest of the Bali package and the work on Aid for Trade and the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries. WTO will have the Fifth Global Review of Aid for Trade from 30 June to 2 July 2015 under the theme of "Reducing trade costs for inclusive, sustainable growth". High trade costs acted as an obstacle to the trade integration of many developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. The most recent figures on Aid for Trade flows indicated that commitments to least developed countries stood at $8.8 billion in 2012, up from $7.2 billion in 2011. He drew attention to the problem of access to trade finance. He highlighted that up to 80 per cent of global trade was supported by some form of financing or credit insurance. Nevertheless, in many countries there was a lack of capacity in the financial sector to support trade and a lack of access to the international financial system. The situation had worsened after the financial crisis, as global private financial institutions had been withdrawing from the least developed countries. He expressed the commitment of WTO members and the Director General to put trade finance on the agenda of the Conference in Addis Ababa.

V. Thematic debate on theme 2: "Current challenges and emerging opportunities for the mobilization of financial resources and their effective use for sustainable development on the road to Addis Ababa"

23. The thematic debate featured presentations and statements by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Lilianne Ploumen; the co-facilitators of the preparatory process for the Conference in Addis Ababa, George Talbot (Guyana) and Geir O. Pedersen (Norway); the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mukhisa Kituyi; and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and

Social Affairs and Secretary-General of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, Wu Hongbo.

24. Ms. Ploumen noted that, at the IMF/World Bank spring meetings in April 2015, the participants had emphasized how to move "from billions to trillions". She indicated that the discussions had focused on official development assistance, national resource mobilization and the importance of engaging the private sector. She underlined that official development assistance was and remained of key importance to those in greatest need, such as least developed countries, small island developing States and fragile and conflict-affected countries. With regard to national resource mobilization, she emphasized three points: multilateral and bilateral support to capacity-building for national tax administrations; inclusion of anti-abuse measures in all new bilateral tax treaties between advanced and developing countries, and revising existing treaties to curb tax avoidance; and more inclusive dialogue on tax base erosion and profit-shifting. She expressed the support of the Netherlands for stronger international cooperation on tackling tax avoidance. Lastly, she called for the use of all available financial sources, including private finance. She stressed that innovative finance should help to leverage additional private resources, especially through multi-stakeholder partnerships.

25. Mr. Talbot pointed out three challenges ahead: change, skill and response ambition. Change was given by making sustainability the defining paradigm of the future, as found in the sustainable development goals. In his view, the main question was how to build confidence to ensure that all partners were committed to delivering on a very ambitious agenda. The challenge of skill was about how to deal effectively with such established goals and how to mobilize the necessary resources. Response ambition referred to a credible framework for implementation and specific deliverables that matched the demands of the post-2015 development agenda. Mr. Pedersen highlighted the need for new and fresh ideas, especially for cross-cutting initiatives and synergies. He acknowledged broad agreement on the role of official development assistance, the need to mobilize national resources and increase taxation, and the key role of the private sector.

26. Mr. Kituyi welcomed the repeated calls for stronger international action to mobilize national public finance for development paid for by taxes and to promote the role of private finance in meeting the sustainable development goals. He emphasized three additional actions for the financing for development process. First, he recalled the holistic nature of the Monterrey Consensus to ensure that the agreement arising from the Conference in Addis Ababa would be comprehensive and forward-looking. He stressed that financing for development was not only about aid, taxes and the private sector but also about paying greater attention to systemic issues such as capacity-building, technology and innovation, as well as updating the approach to trade and investment issues at large. Second, he said that such an agreement from the Addis Ababa Conference should fully recognize the importance of trade and investment and highlight their role in national development strategies. In particular, financing for development required support for capacity-building activities such as trade facilitation, trade diversification, improving understanding of non-tariff measures and improving collection of trade-related revenues. Third, he emphasized the importance of sustainable governance of international investment. He called for highlighting the role that the international community could play in facilitating regional and global investment in trading activity through regional infrastructure and technical support.

27. Mr. Wu focused on the preparations for the Conference in Addis Ababa. He stated that it presented a unique opportunity to adopt a strong financing framework for sustainable development and provide the means of implementation for the post-2015 development agenda. He stressed the ongoing intensive period of preparations for the Conference, including the second drafting session of the outcome document and the joint session between the financing for development and the post-2015 processes, as well as IMF/World Bank spring meetings in April 2015, where the Secretary-General had made the case for an ambitious outcome and the highest level of participation in the Conference. He also outlined the key points that had emerged from the regional consultations on financing for development organized by the United Nations regional commissions. The participants had emphasized the importance of national resource mobilization and the need for reforms at the national and international levels, for example, to combat illicit financial flows and curtail tax avoidance and evasion, and to ensure greater and more inclusive international cooperation in tax matters. There had been strong calls upon donors to meet their official development assistance commitments of 0.7 per cent of GDP. Some had called for more ambitious official development assistance targets. With regard to the private sector, there had been some discussion of the impediments to all private finance and investment becoming sustainable. The role of migrant communities in mobilizing domestic and international private resources had also been discussed. In his capacity as Secretary-General of the Conference in Addis Ababa, he reiterated his commitment to making the Conference a success and to working closely with the heads of the World Bank Group, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to mobilize high-level political support for the Conference.

28. In the ensuing discussion, participants drew attention to the importance of job-intensive growth, national resources for development financing, tax compliance and tax capacity, official development assistance, private sector and corporate social responsibility and technology transfer, as well as efforts to prevent debt crisis and to carry out debt restructuring. It was suggested that climate finance and development finance should be accounted for separately. Carbon prices and subsidies for energy were also discussed.

VI. Thematic debate on theme 3: "Renewed global partnership for development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda"

29. The thematic debate featured presentations by the Co-Dean of the Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank Group, Hervé de Villeroché; the Executive Director of the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation, Juan Manuel Valle Pereña; the Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support of UNDP, Magdy Martínez-Solimán; and the Deputy Director of the Development Cooperation Directorate of OECD, Brenda Killen.

30. Mr. de Villeroché observed that the discussions at the IMF/World Bank spring meetings in April 2015 demonstrated how useful it was to deepen the relationships and exchange of views between various institutions. He noted that the joint paper, "From billions to trillions: transforming development finance", prepared by the

World Bank Group, IMF and multilateral development banks, offered a new paradigm of how to use official development assistance, national resources, public and private funds, and innovative sources to finance development. In his view, the main challenge ahead was how to concretize the collective vision over the coming fifteen years. Official development assistance was essential for low-income developing countries, fragile states and countries affected by conflict. Nevertheless, there was a need to bring in remittances of migrants and foreign direct investment, and to make fiscal systems more effective. He pointed out other challenges, such as climate change and public health, that required coordinated action before and after the Conference in Addis Ababa.

31. Mr. Pereña remarked that the former Millennium Development Goals paradigm had been driven by the donor-recipient dichotomy and would no longer be applicable to yield results in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. He called for partnerships to be at the core of the new development agenda during the period 2015-2030. It was important to share public policies that had proved successful. Civil society, besides being a constant reminder of responsibilities and areas of opportunity, was collaborating in the oversight and implementation of important development projects. Triangular cooperation between Southern and traditional partners was growing. South-South cooperation had to become more successful. In that respect, he pointed out the need to strengthen the data collection capacity of South-South cooperation. Effective South-South cooperation relationships were often characterized by inclusive and horizontal partnerships and networks based on equity, trust and mutual learning. He indicated that Mexico had promoted the need to share methodologies and data collection practices through international cooperation. He added that the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation could be a platform for exchanging experiences and building a community of practice where demand could meet supply, with specific and tangible effects on development cooperation, coordination and implementation.

32. Mr. Martínez-Solimán noted that financing in the Millennium Development Goals era was often conceived as adding up the resources available to developing countries from different sources — for example, domestic resources, foreign direct investment and remittances — to meet the Goals and then fill in the gap with official development assistance. He underscored that that approach was insufficient. The universality and breadth of the new agenda would require moving from filling gaps to mobilizing very large financial flows — from billions to trillions, as highlighted by the World Bank and other institutions. However, the quality and quantity of official development assistance would remain crucial, in particular for least developed countries. In that context, he voiced concern that total aid had grown while the share allocated to the poorest countries and to Africa had recently been decreasing. The post-2015 development agenda was much larger than aid and could not be achieved through public finance alone. Incentives would be needed to ensure that private investment decisions could move the world towards sustainable development aspirations. In the future, business operations and results should contribute directly to the achievement of the sustainable development goals in ways that went beyond corporate social responsibility and philanthropy. He also stressed the importance of learning how to operate in the presence of numerous shocks to the world economy and increased volatility.

33. Ms. Killen emphasized that partnerships had been a hallmark of the work of OECD for the past 50 years. OECD saw its role as twofold: first, holding its members to account for their development commitments; and, second, facilitating inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships among OECD members and with low-income and middle-income countries, the private sector and civil society to enhance collective impact. She mentioned some of the platforms, tools and good practices that OECD had developed and that could contribute to a renewed global partnership for sustainable development. Those included the joint work with the United Nations to support the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation as well as a range of other dialogue platforms to share experiences on best practices and effective policy implementation in the areas of public sector reforms, taxes, direct investment, innovation, green growth, multinational enterprises, gender equality, fragility and conflicts. She added that peer review mechanisms were another distinguishing feature of OECD's international cooperation toolkit. She outlined four success imperatives for successful partnerships in the post-2015 era: secure high-level leadership; ensure that partnerships were country-led and context-specific; agree on principles, targets, implementation plans and enforcement mechanisms; and maintain a clear focus on results.

34. In the ensuing discussion, some participants raised the issues of young emerging donor countries and the need to facilitate access to credit and to increase the share of exports in GDP. The negative economic implications of climate change for developing countries were also highlighted, as was the need to find more resources to finance the broad set of sustainable development goals. There was a call to strengthen the engagement of civil society and young people in the post-2015 development agenda.

VII. Presentation on "world economic situation and prospects"

35. The Chief of the World Economic Studies Division of IMF, Thomas Helbling, presented the highlights of IMF's *World Economic Outlook* (April 2015). According to IMF forecasts, global growth was to remain moderate and uneven in 2015, with some improvement expected in 2016, owing mainly to the tensions produced by the sharp fall in oil prices accompanied by further declines in long-term interest rates and inflation, as well as the continuing exchange rate realignment among major currencies. Although lower oil prices were a small net positive for the world economy, the downside risks had rotated from developed economies to emerging markets, especially energy exporters, and a lower potential growth in developed and major emerging market economies weighed on demand. It was therefore important to use the opportunities offered by low oil prices to build up a fiscal buffer. To date, most oil exporters had managed to maintain expenditure levels by increasing fiscal deficits. The recent United States dollar appreciation and the yen and euro depreciations had also been a net positive, boosting global demand. However, the potential risks of capital flows reversal and financial instability were real concerns for developing countries. In particular, the expected tightening by the Federal Reserve in mid-2015 raised the possibility of a "taper tantrum" with wide repercussions. Many African and low-income countries appeared to have achieved a permanent upward shift in their trend growth thanks to improved policies, structural changes and human capital improvement, the ending of the cyclical overheating and fall in commodity prices notwithstanding. Nevertheless, growth in emerging market

economies had become extensive, relying on capital and labour expansion rather than productivity growth, and expectations of lower potential growth and the ongoing slowing in China could hamper investment.

36. In the ensuing discussion, participants asked questions about specific effects of world economic trends and prospects for the post-2015 development agenda, the implications of the slowdown of growth in China, the consequences of lower commodity prices for growth in Latin America, the forecasts of exchange rates for major currencies and the duration of crisis legacies. Mr. Hebling underlined that capital flows to emerging markets and developing economies remained strong, although lower than pre-crisis levels. Policy frameworks had adjusted and many economies had adopted new rules to manage capital flows. He stressed that the slowdown in China had been expected and was in part policy-induced. Some surprises in the dynamics of commodity prices were not caused by China and the slowdown of its economy. There were other powerful, non-market factors, such as sanctions and outages of production owing to geopolitical reasons. In terms of currency fluctuations, the concern was that, once exchange rates movements were set in motion, they would often develop a life of their own, so there might be another dollar cycle and the adjustment would continue for some time. As to crisis legacies, he said that growth for the major advanced economies was to remain relatively modest over the coming five years.

VIII. Thematic debate on theme 4: "Follow-up and the way forward: enhancing the role of the Economic and Social Council"

37. The thematic debate featured presentations by the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations and Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, María Emma Mejía Vélez, and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and Vice-President of the Council, Oh Joon.

38. Ms. Vélez said that the Economic and Social Council should play a key role in the follow-up to the post-2015 development agenda and the Conference in Addis Ababa. She mentioned that the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council in July 2015 and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review in 2016 would make an important contribution. She stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination throughout the United Nations system. She said that the new architecture for follow-up and review should be based largely on the experiences of the voluntary national presentations at the annual ministerial reviews. With regard to follow-up mechanisms, she noted that the roles of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council was yet to be discussed and determined. She added that the first level of accountability was at the national level.

39. Mr. Oh stressed that economic growth and job creation were essential for mobilizing development resources. He highlighted three main elements for the way forward: integration, implementation and interaction. First, the Economic and Social Council was supposed to promote the integration of the three aspects of the sustainable development — economic, social and environmental — in the United Nations system and beyond. Second, the Council would play a central role in the

implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and in the follow-up to the implementation of decisions of past world summits and conferences. Third, the interaction function of the Council was determined by the fact that it had been mandated to serve as a platform to coordinate global, regional and national development activities. He emphasized that the strength of the Council lay in partnership with the subsidiary bodies and various institutions and stakeholders. The Council could connect the new development agenda, the operations of the United Nations development system and financing for development. As such, the regular exchanges and the annual special high-level meetings with the World Bank, IMF, WTO and UNCTAD would continue to be particularly useful for all parties involved.

40. In the ensuing discussion, representatives of civil society proposed ways to strengthen the special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, IMF, WTO and UNCTAD in the follow-up to the Conference in Addis Ababa, especially on its format, structure and substantive focus, as well as the interactions between the Council and international financial institutions. The issue of accountability at the national and global levels was also discussed, with some references to peer reviews as useful instruments.

IX. Concluding remarks by the President of the Economic and Social Council

41. The President of the Economic and Social Council expressed thanks to all participants for the constructive spirit of engagement and valuable contributions to the debate, noting that the meeting had brought together the key players involved in deliberations on the post-2015 development agenda and its means of implementation.

42. He summarized the main features of the discussions, noting, among other things:

(a) That the road to Addis Ababa was challenging. The global economic outlook was uneven and there was no room for complacency. Unemployment remained very high, in particular among young people. Yet, recent economic trends were sending positive signals. It was important to create enabling national and global environments for development. A strong global economy was fertile ground for development, while a weak one would have pronounced economic implications. A package of ambitious structural reforms should be put in place in many areas, including labour markets, social sectors, infrastructure and energy. These reforms would be vital for the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda;

(b) That all sources of development finance — public and private, national and international — were needed. Official development assistance would remain crucial in the new financing framework, especially for poor countries and those in special situations. At the same time, such assistance alone would not suffice and additional resources for the new universal agenda should be made available;

(c) That the importance of strengthening tax collection capacity and tax compliance, as well as addressing illicit financial flows, had been underscored several times;

(d) That, with regard to the private sector, many participants had underlined the potential and importance of small and medium-sized enterprises, in terms of both economic growth and job creation;

(e) That the development agenda should also recognize the need for coherence and consistency in the trading system, working to address distortions in trade, non-tariff measures, tariff peaks and other policies that harmed developing countries. Completing the Doha Round was important to fully harness the potential for trade and investment;

(f) That some participants had called for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in global economic governance and international cooperation in tax matters. There had been calls for governance reforms of international financial institutions to improve the voice and representation of developing countries.

43. He called for the strong engagement of all relevant stakeholders in tackling the challenges ahead in formulating and implementing a new global financing framework, stressing that the Council stood ready to play its part.

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Agenda item 134 of the preliminary list*
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Internal oversight: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Report of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee

Summary

The present report reflects the comments, advice and recommendations of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee on the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2016-2017.

* A/70/50.

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I. Introduction

1. The Independent Audit Advisory Committee has undertaken a review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) for the biennium 2016-2017 in accordance with paragraph 2 (c) and (d) of its terms of reference (see General Assembly resolution 61/275, annex). The Committee's responsibility in this respect is to review the budget proposal of OIOS, taking into account its workplan, and to make recommendations to the General Assembly through the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The present report contains the Committee's comments, advice and recommendations relating to the proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2016-2017, for the consideration of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly.

2. The Programme Planning and Budget Division of the Department of Management provided the Committee with the section of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 on internal oversight (A/70/6 (Sect. 30)), as well as relevant supplementary information. OIOS provided supplementary information relating to its budget proposal, which the Committee took into consideration. At its thirtieth session, held from 27 to 29 April 2015, the Committee allocated a significant proportion of its agenda to discussions with OIOS and with the Controller on the budget for OIOS.

3. The Committee would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Programme Planning and Budget Division in expediting the preparation of the internal oversight section of the budget for review by the Committee. The Committee also appreciates the cooperation and responsiveness on the part of OIOS in providing information for the preparation of the present report.

II. Review of the proposed programme budget for the Office of Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2016-2017

4. The projected resources for OIOS for the biennium 2016-2017 from the regular budget, combined with other assessed and extrabudgetary funds, totalled $126,906,300, compared with $122,657,100 for the biennium 2014-2015, which is an increase of 3.5 per cent. The Committee noted that while the total budget had increased overall, the extrabudgetary component had increased by a higher rate, of 8.8 per cent, from $20,109,500 for 2014-2015 to an estimated $21,869,300 for 2016-2017. This is largely owing to the proposed increase in funding from other United Nations organizations (3.8 per cent) and support for substantive activities (34.3 per cent) (see table 1 below).

Table 1
Financial resources by component
(Thousands of United States dollars)

Component	*2012-2013 expenditure*	*Percentage share*	*2014-2015 appropriation*	*Percentage share*	*2016-2017 estimate*	*Percentage share*	*Resource growth*	
							As a percentage of 2012-2013 expenditure	*As a percentage of 2014-2015 appropriation*
Regular budget	**38 501.6**	**35.9**	**40 632.1**	**33.1**	**42 520.0**	**33.5**	**10.4**	**4.6**
Other assessed	**52 397.9**	**48.9**	**61 915.5**	**50.5**	**62 517.0**	**49.3**	**19.3**	**1**
Services in support of:								
International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda	467.3	0.4	401.9	0.3	–	–	(100)	(100)
International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia	498.0	0.5	715.3	0.6	715.3	0.6	43.6	–
Capital master plan	1 249.5	1.2	546.8	0.4	–	–	(100)	(100)
Peacekeeping operation activities	50 183.1	46.8	60 251.5	49.1	61 801.7	48.7	23.2	3
Extrabudgetary	**16 262.1**	**15.2**	**20 109.5**	**16.4**	**21 869.3**	**17.2**	**34.5**	**8.8**
United Nations organizations	13 202.6	12.3	16 184.6	13.2	16 805.7	13.2	27.3	3.8
Support to extrabudgetary substantive activities	2 317.1	2.2	3 316.0	2.7	4 454.7	3.5	92.3	34.3
Technical cooperation activities	742.4	0.7	608.9	0.5	608.9	0.5	(18)	–
Total	**107 161.6**	**100**	**122 657.1**	**100**	**126 906.3**	**100**	**18.4**	**3.5**

Note: Budget figures (after recosting) were based on the budget fascicle contained in A/70/6 (Sect. 30) and the relevant supplementary information.

5. As shown in table 1, the proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2016-2017 (regular budget) is estimated at $42,520,000 (after recosting), which is an increase of $1,887,900 or 4.6 per cent, compared with the 2014-2015 appropriation. While table 1 shows costs after recosting, the Committee's report generally uses values before recosting (which exclude estimated increases owing to inflation and currency fluctuations), in order to facilitate comparisons between the budgets for the bienniums 2014-2015 and 2016-2017.

6. Table 2 presents the regular budget proposal for OIOS for the biennium 2016-2017 compared with the actual expenditure for the biennium 2012-2013 and the appropriation for the biennium 2014-2015. The proposed programme budget for OIOS for the biennium 2016-2017 (regular budget) is estimated at $41,482,600 (before recosting), which is an increase of $850,500, or 2.1 per cent, compared with the appropriation for 2014-2015.

Table 2
Financial resources by programme
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2012-2013	2014-2015	2016-2017	Variance		2016-2017 compared to 2012-2013 expenditure
				2016-2017 compared to 2014-2015 appropriation		
	Expenditure	Appropriation	Proposed budget (before recosting)	Amount	Percentage	Percentage
A. Executive direction and management	2 783.1	3 213.6	3 038.5	(175.1)	(5.4)	9.2
B. Programme of work	33 117.7	34 747.9	35 903.7	1 155.8	3.3	8.4
Subprogramme 1. Internal audit	15 290.7	15 508.8	17 240.8	1 732.0	11.2	12.8
Subprogramme 2. Inspection and evaluation	7 733.4	8 063.3	7 794.9	(268.4)	(3.3)	0.8
Subprogramme 3. Investigations	10 093.6	11 175.8	10 868.0	(307.8)	(2.8)	7.7
C. Programme support costs	2 600.8	2 670.6	2 540.4	(130.2)	(4.9)	(2.3)
Total	**38 501.6**	**40 632.1**	**41 482.6**	**850.5**	**2.1**	**7.7**

Note: Budget figures (before recosting) were based on the budget fascicle A/70/6 (Sect. 30) and the relevant supplementary information.

7. The 2.1 per cent increase in the budget compared with the biennium 2014-2015 is primarily as a result of a proposal to transfer the resident auditor functions for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to the Internal Audit Division of OIOS. The rest of the programmes saw a reduction in the resource requirements for the biennium 2016-17 attributable to, inter alia, the abolition of two posts, from 118 posts approved in the biennium 2014-2015, to 116 proposed posts for the biennium 2016-2017.

8. The Committee also noted that, as at 30 April 2015, there continued to be a high vacancy rate in OIOS, especially in the Investigation Division, where the vacancy rate was 25.3 per cent. The Committee was informed that the vacancy levels in that Division had declined from a high of 33.9 per cent, reported in paragraph 56 of the Committee's report on its activities for the period from 1 August 2013 to 31 July 2014 (see A/69/304) to the current 25.3 per cent. **The Committee notes the effort that OIOS has been putting into the recruitment process. However, the Committee continues to draw attention to its prior reports on this matter and reiterates that particular attention should be made to address the vacancy rates, through identifying alternative recruitment and retention strategies for qualified staff.**

A. Executive direction and management

9. The proposed number of posts in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services for the biennium 2016-2017 remains unchanged, at eight. The 5.4 per cent decrease in the proposed resources was mainly attributable to a 65.8 per cent reduction under contractual services, from $239,000 in 2014-2015 to $81,700 in 2016-2017, as a result of the removal of non-recurrent costs for acquisition of the system for audit management and web-based recommendation tracking.

10. With respect to the web-based system for tracking OIOS recommendations, the Committee recalled paragraph 25 of General Assembly resolution 65/270, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to invite the oversight bodies to explore the possibility of utilizing the web-based system of the Joint Inspection Unit to enhance coordination. In paragraph 10 of its report on the proposed programme budget for 2014-2015 (see A/68/86 and Corr.1), the Committee was informed that OIOS would review all the systems available, including the one used by the Joint Inspection Unit, to determine which system would best fit the needs of OIOS. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that OIOS should continue to enhance the coordination among oversight bodies, as called for in Assembly resolution 65/270, as well as to ensure that the needs of stakeholders, including the client offices/departments, continue to be considered in this regard.

11. Upon further enquiry, OIOS informed the Committee that they had reviewed and considered the Joint Inspection Unit system prior to initiating a procurement exercise, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 65/270. However, because the Joint Inspection Unit system was designed as a stand-alone follow-up system for recommendation, which according to OIOS, is just a part of what it requires from a tracking system, OIOS felt that it would benefit more from a system that integrated its recommendation follow-up with its audit management process. OIOS believes this will result in a seamless process for audit engagement from start to finish. **The Committee welcomes the progress made by OIOS in implementing the web-based tracking and audit management system and plans to follow up on its effectiveness in future sessions.**

B. Programme of work

Subprogramme 1
Internal audit

12. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 1, Internal audit, for the biennium 2016-2017, is $17,240,800 (before recosting). The amount represents an increase of $1,732,000, or 11.2 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $15,508,800 for the biennium 2014-2015. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that the increase was mainly attributable to an increase in other staff costs from $116,000 in 2014-2015 to $1,903,000 for 2016-2017, primarily as a result of the transfer of resident auditor functions from UNAMA and UNAMI to OIOS. The Committee notes that the number of posts required for internal audit has remained unchanged, at 46. The Committee was further informed that, apart from the increase in the other staff costs noted above, most of the other budget categories for internal audit registered decreases.

Risk-based workplanning process

13. The Committee held extensive discussions with OIOS on their risk-based audit workplanning process to ascertain how the Internal Audit Division takes organizational risk into account in determining the level of resources required to deliver the programme of work. The Committee continues to believe that using risk assessments to prioritize and allocate audit resources is a best practice, which the Committee supported in its previous reports on the budget for OIOS. On that note, OIOS informed the Committee that a three-year rolling workplan was developed, using the same risk-based

approach that was used for the 2013 and 2014 workplanning. According to OIOS, the process involved validating and updating the previous years' audit universe and updating the risk universe for all client entities, covering programmes, functions, structures, processes, initiatives and information technology systems.

14. The Office of Internal Oversight Services further informed the Committee that a risk-ranked audit universe of auditable activities had been developed, taking into account the impact and likelihood of risks; the controls that exist to mitigate risks; previous oversight activities; the results of ongoing interactions/consultations within OIOS and with the Board of Auditors and the Joint Inspection Unit; and other priorities. According to OIOS, management requests for audits were also taken into account. OIOS identified thematic audits in several areas, including the following: Umoja implementation, the management of extrabudgetary funded operations, the management of subprogrammes in regional commissions and the effectiveness of procurement oversight bodies within the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. On the basis of the risk assessment, OIOS indicated that the Internal Audit Division planned to perform 100 regular budget audit assignments, of which 17 would be thematic, as well as 124 extrabudgetary assignments, 13 of which would be thematic.

15. Recalling paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 69/249, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take measures to address deficiencies as regards control and fraud prevention, the Committee enquired as to how the current workplan of OIOS had taken into account the recent findings of the Board of Auditors, especially in relation to fraud and internal control. In response, OIOS informed the Committee that it agreed with the concerns identified by the Board of Auditors and that the Internal Audit Division had been working closely with the Investigations Division in ensuring that findings, especially those pertaining to fraud, are properly investigated. Furthermore, OIOS highlighted a need for additional data analysis capability, particularly in the context of the Organization implementing Umoja.

16. **The Committee believes that combating fraud, especially by implementing partners, an issue raised by OIOS through its Nairobi-based investigation unit operating in Somalia last year (see A/69/308 (Part I), para. 44), is of critical importance and should feature prominently in the workplan of the Office. The Committee expects to discuss this matter further in its annual report.**

Capacity gap assessment

17. The Office of Internal Oversight Services informed the Committee that, in order to identify the resource gaps, the Internal Audit Division had compared the available audit resources by funding type against the number of planned assignments per year based on the Division's standard audit criteria of covering 50 per cent of all high-risk areas and 20 per cent of all medium-risk areas. As a result of that analysis, OIOS indicated that it had insufficient resources to conduct information and communications technology audits of activities funded under the regular budget across the Secretariat. There were also resource gaps as regards covering activities funded under extrabudgetary resources in the following entities: the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the United Nations University, the Joint Staff Pension Fund and UNHCR.

18. Accordingly, OIOS informed the Committee that it had proposed two information and communications technology auditor posts at the P-4 level under the regular budget as part of its proposal for the biennium 2016-2017, but the proposal was not endorsed by the Secretary-General, in line with the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 12 of its resolution 69/264. According to OIOS, the impact of the non-endorsement will be that the Internal Audit Division will not be able to fully undertake the information and communications technology audits called for by the Division's risk-based workplanning process. The Division will aim to mitigate the gap by gradually redeploying some staff resources to information and communications technology work and recruiting some auditors with higher levels of experience and qualifications in that subject area. Upon further discussion with the Controller, the Committee was informed that the capacity gap in the regular budget could partially be addressed through funds OIOS had requested for subject matter experts in Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP), who would facilitate audits of Umoja, post-implementation. The expertise of such consultants would be secured externally, as needed, rather than establishing the expertise in-house.

19. With respect to capacity gaps arising from insufficient extrabudgetary resources, OIOS had secured resources for one additional P-3 auditor post from the extrabudgetary resources of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and three additional P-3 auditor posts from the resources of UNHCR. OIOS had also requested one additional post from the Pension Fund to audit the information and communications technology aspects of the Fund's work. OIOS informed the Committee that discussions were ongoing with the United Nations University to provide resources for audit coverage.

20. **The Committee acknowledges the effort of the Internal Audit Division to undertake a risk-based workplanning process. The Committee notes that the requested posts were not endorsed by the Secretary-General. On the other hand, the Committee also notes that the Secretary-General has supported the request for funds for hiring subject matter expert consultants in Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing. In order to ensure that critical aspects of its workplan are not adversely affected, the Committee recommends that OIOS continue to refine its risk assessment and prioritize its workplan so as to ensure that high-risk areas, such as information and communications technology, are adequately covered. On that note, the Committee endorses the resource requirements for the Internal Audit Division, as presented.**

Subprogramme 2
Inspection and evaluation

21. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 2, Inspection and evaluation, amounts to $7,794,900 (before recosting), representing a net decrease of $268,400, or 3.3 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $8,063,300 for the biennium 2014-2015. The Committee was informed that the reduction in the budget was mainly attributable to the removal of the non-recurrent provision for general temporary assistance to cover the transitional costs of the D-1 post that was abolished in the budget for 2014-2015. The Committee was further informed that the Inspection and Evaluation Division planned to maintain the same staffing levels (22 posts) for the biennium 2016-2017.

Workplan implementation

22. The Committee was informed that, of the 11 assignments planned for completion in 2014, 10 had been completed on or close to schedule. At the same time, more than half of the assignments for 2015 have been completed on schedule. **The Committee notes the effort that OIOS has put into the timely completion of the regular budget evaluation assignments. Timely completion of evaluations is important to ensure that decision makers and stakeholders have access to key programme results information when they need it. The Committee has previously expressed its concerns regarding delays in completing peacekeeping evaluations.**

Risk assessment and capacity gap analysis

23. The Committee was informed that the Inspection and Evaluation Division continued to refine its risk assessment approach, utilizing a combination of risk information from the Internal Audit Division and an assessment of entities' monitoring and evaluation capacity and of the budget allocated to those entities. The assessment also included an analysis of the priorities set by the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for the identification of thematic topics. Based on the risk assessment by the Internal Audit Division, OIOS indicated that the Inspection and Evaluation Division is focusing on the areas with the highest aggregate risk in terms of governance, strategy and programme and project management.

24. With respect to the capacity gap, the Committee was informed that the budget proposal for the Inspection and Evaluation Division provides for resources to conduct 10 evaluation assignments every biennium, one of which is the mandated thematic evaluation. The assignments will come from the following entities: UNHCR, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the Department of Political Affairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and substantive components of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. OIOS further indicated that, given the high-risk ranking of UNHCR, OIOS proposes to subject it to more regular, annual evaluations. OIOS was exploring, in consultation with UNHCR, the establishment of a standing independent evaluation capacity, similar to what currently exists for peacekeeping activities.

25. According to OIOS, the inability to reduce the evaluation cycle from a periodicity of every 11-13 years to a frequency of every eight years, in line with the requirements of the General Assembly, continues to constitute one of the biggest aspects of the capacity gap. In spite of the gap, OIOS indicated to the Committee that it did not request additional resources, owing to the prevailing resource situation in the Secretariat. Instead, OIOS informed the Committee that it was exploring opportunities for cost recovery from extrabudgetary resources, especially with respect to UNHCR which, as noted in the figure that follows paragraph 17 of the Committee's report on the proposed programme budget for 2012-2013 (see A/66/85), was predominantly funded from extrabudgetary resources. OIOS also informed the Committee of possible strategies it was considering for addressing the capacity gap without requesting additional resources. Such strategies would, potentially, include using performance audits to evaluate the effectiveness and

efficiency of management, administrative and support functions. Such performance audits would be undertaken by the Internal Audit Division, using methodologies developed in collaboration with the Inspection and Evaluation Division to focus on the evaluation of substantive programmes. OIOS further informed the Committee that using such an approach could reduce the cycle for evaluating substantive programmes to five years (three years less than the mandated eight years). The Internal Audit Division would use existing resources to gradually incorporate performance audits into its work and reassess resource needs once the new methodology was fully in place. **On that note, the Committee reiterates its recommendation regarding revisiting the issue of funding, as contained in paragraph 18 of its report (A/66/85), and the subsequent recommendations on the funding arrangements of OIOS. The Committee intends to study the merits of the strategy further and will advise the General Assembly accordingly in the context of its annual report.**

26. **The Committee endorses the workplan and related budget for the Inspection and Evaluation Division, which call for the maintenance of the same level of resources as during the biennium 2014-2015.**

Subprogramme 3
Investigations

27. The proposed programme budget for subprogramme 3, Investigations, for the biennium 2016-2017 amounts to $10,868,000 (before recosting), representing a net decrease of $307,800, or 2.8 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $11,175,800 for the biennium 2014-2015. The net decrease in the overall resource requirement for the regular budget is attributed to the reduction in the number of posts requested, from 34 in 2014-2015, to 33 in the proposed budget for the biennium 2016-2017, in accordance with paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 69/264.

Workplan process

28. The Committee was informed that, on the basis of progress on the caseload progress for 2013-2014, the Division anticipates a similar, if not higher caseload for 2016-2017. According to OIOS, this is primarily attributable to the accelerating work on implementing partner investigations, combined with the effect that the new case management system will have in enabling the Investigations Division to perform more proactive investigations with a superior ability to conduct link analysis between cases, entities and individuals. OIOS further indicated that it expects that new cases will be addressed in a manner that is both more timely and more comprehensive, as a result of more rigorous and regular caseload reviews, which are primarily aimed at achieving greater efficiency in the handling of future investigations.

29. The Committee was further informed that in the biennium 2016-2017, the Investigations Division will benefit from current initiatives, namely:

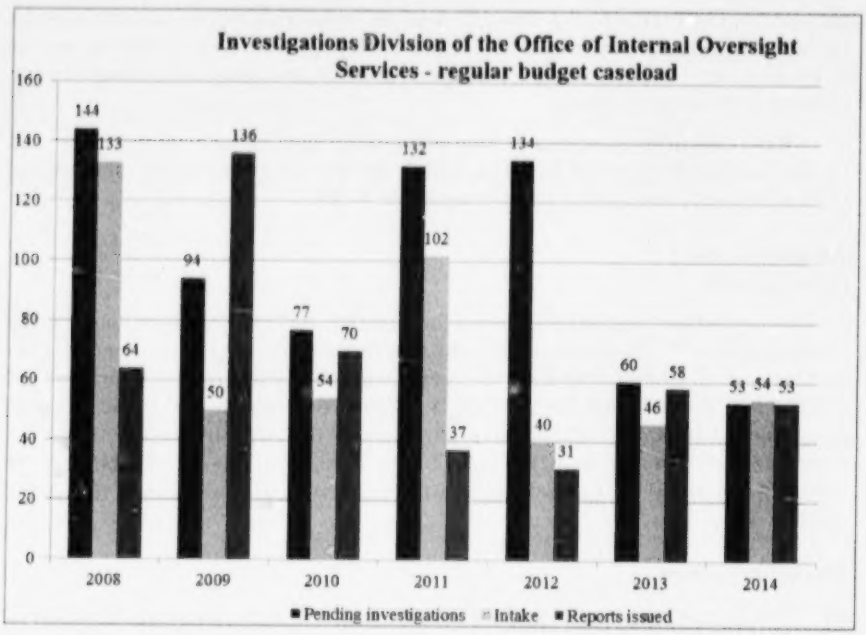
(a) Sustained attention to finalizing the investigation of cases pending for more than 12 months;

(b) Introduction of efficiency measures, such as streamlining the Division's report development process;

(c) Introduction of a new case management system, as noted in paragraph 28 above;

(d) Enhancement of the use of technical aids, such as audio recording, transcription and videoconferencing, whenever appropriate and necessary.

30. As an illustration of the progress achieved as a result of the new initiatives introduced in the Investigations Division, the Committee received an updated trend analysis, showing a significant drop in the number of cases pending investigation, from 134 cases in 2012 to 53 in 2014 (see the figure below).



31. **The Committee believes that the current initiatives, if successfully implemented, will form the basis of a more effective and efficient Investigations Division. The Committee strongly encourages OIOS to continue to closely manage the implementation of those initiatives. The Committee continues to believe that augmented effort is needed to bring down the average length of time for completing an investigation, from the current 14 months, as reported in the first quarter of 2015, to the target of 6 months. The Committee will review the matter and provide a further update in its annual report.**

Risk assessment and the capacity gap analysis

Capacity gap

32. The Office of Internal Oversight Services informed the Committee that it had proposed the establishment of two posts (Training Officers) at the P-4 level, under the regular budget, as part of its proposed programme budget for 2016-2017, but that the proposal had not been endorsed by the Secretary-General. On that note, the

Committee enquired as to how the non-endorsement of the posts would affect the workplan of the Investigations Division.

33. In response, OIOS informed the Committee that the requirement for training was in fulfilment of paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 59/287, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to increase basic investigation training for the handling of minor forms of misconduct, to develop written procedures for the proper conduct of investigations and to promote the concept of an independent investigation function within the United Nations. According to OIOS, in the absence of such posts, providing investigative training to units outside of OIOS would require the use of investigators to provide the training, which would in turn reduce the resources available for conducting investigations.

34. The Committee sought comments from the Controller in this regard and was informed that the decision not to endorse the requirement was in line with General Assembly resolution 69/264. In addition, the Controller informed the Committee that, with regard to the consistently high vacancy rates in the Investigations Division, it was difficult to justify additional posts.

35. **The Committee notes the need to fulfil the mandate specified by the General Assembly regarding training. The Committee is also aware that there have been discussions between OIOS and management regarding the potential transfer of some of the investigations currently performed by management to OIOS, and that discussions in the context of strengthening the investigation function were still ongoing. In the light of the above, the Committee believes that decisions about augmenting the capacity of the Investigations Division to provide investigation training to other units should not be made in isolation, but rather in the context of broader decisions about the overall organization, roles and responsibilities concerning investigations across the Secretariat.**

Risk assessment

36. In paragraph 25 of its previous report, the Committee welcomed two initiatives that OIOS had established to improve its effectiveness, namely, an improved forensic unit to further assess risk-based matters and enhanced capacity in procurement fraud-related irregularities (see A/68/86). The Committee sought updates on the status of those two initiatives. With respect to the forensic unit, the Committee was informed that the digital forensic unit initially comprised three posts at the P-4 level and one at the P-3 level. The P-3 post would be abolished under the current budget submission. The Committee was informed that OIOS has determined that, rather than having a distinct unit supervised from New York, the capacity would be better utilized by changing the reporting lines of the three remaining P-4 posts (located in headquarters in New York, Vienna and Nairobi) to the Deputy Directors, whose investigations they primarily support. With respect to procurement fraud, the Committee was informed that the Proactive Risk Unit would enable the Investigations Division to perform more proactive procurement investigations.

37. **In the light of the ongoing implementation of Umoja and the wealth of valuable data it is expected to provide, and without prejudice to the expected service delivery model for the Secretariat, the Committee plans to discuss further the synergies that could be created by incorporating the new case management system into the proactive risk management process.**

38. The work of the Proactive Risk Unit notwithstanding, the Committee was informed that the activities of the Investigations Division continue to be driven largely by the reactive nature of its work and that it was a constant challenge to estimate the volume of matters that the Division would address during any given period. On that note, OIOS indicated that a five-year trend analysis was the basis for its estimates of the number of cases that the Division would handle. OIOS noted that the current five-year trend suggests an annual intake of 293 cases, of which 32 per cent would be investigated, with the remainder referred back to the relevant entities or closed without an investigation. For the biennium 2016-2017, therefore, the Committee was informed that OIOS would reduce the number of posts from 34 in the biennium 2014-2015 to 33 for 2016-2017.

39. **In the light of the above, taking into account that the proposed programme budget for investigations for 2016-2017 continues to be based on the five-year trend analysis of the intake rather than a combination that would include a risk-based workplan, as the Committee has long advocated, as well as the high vacancy rate, and without prejudice to the ongoing process to strengthen the investigation function in the Secretariat, the Committee cannot provide an overall assurance as to the adequacy of the proposed level of investigation resources.**

C. Programme support

40. The proposed budget for programme support for the biennium 2016-2017 amounts to $2,540,400 (before recosting). That amount represents a net decrease of $130,200, or 4.9 per cent, compared with the appropriation of $2,670,600 for the biennium 2014-2015. The reduction in the budget is mainly attributable to the abolishment of one post, which reduces the number of posts from eight to seven.

III. Conclusion

41. The members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee respectfully present the present report, containing the Committee's comments and recommendations, for the consideration of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) J. Christopher **Mihm**
Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Patricia X. Arriagada **Villouta**
Vice-Chair, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Natalia A. **Bocharova**
Member, Independent Audit Advisory Committee

(*Signed*) Richard Quartei **Quartey**
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Item 19 (d) of the provisional agenda**
Social and human rights questions: narcotic drugs

Report on the progress made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly, pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/200, the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the progress made in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.

* A/70/50.
** E/2015/1.

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Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the progress made in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Introduction

1. In the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/182, Member States decided that the Commission, at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014, should conduct a high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, recommended that the Economic and Social Council should devote a high-level segment to a theme related to the world drug problem, and also recommended that the General Assembly should hold a special session to address the world drug problem.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/193 of 20 December 2012, decided to convene the special session early in 2016 and that the special session would "review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action [...] including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other United Nations instruments".

3. In its resolution 68/197 of 18 December 2013, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations organ with prime responsibility for drug control matters, to engage in the preparatory process for the special session, including by presenting proposals from the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions of the Commission through the Economic and Social Council in support of the preparatory process, including progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

4. The midterm review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action was undertaken by the Commission during the high-level segment of its fifty-seventh session, held on 13 and 14 March 2014. Member States conducted a general debate on progress achieved and challenges in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Round-table discussions were held on the three pillars of the Plan of Action: (a) demand reduction; (b) supply reduction; and (c) international cooperation. On 14 March 2014, participants adopted the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. (The Joint Ministerial Statement and the outcome of the round-table discussions of the high-level segment are contained in document A/69/87-E/2014/80.)

5. At its fifty-seventh session, the Commission also adopted resolution 57/5, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be

held in 2016". In that resolution, the Commission decided to take all possible measures to ensure an adequate, inclusive and effective preparatory process for the special session by using its existing meetings and reporting entitlements in the most efficient manner. In addition, it submitted, through the Economic and Social Council, recommendations on modalities related to the preparations for and conduct of the special session. These recommendations were adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 69/200, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", by which the Assembly decided that "the Commission, as the central policymaking body within the United Nations dealing with drug-related matters, shall lead this process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner" and, in that regard, invited the President of the General Assembly to support, guide and stay involved in the process.

6. During the second half of 2014, the Commission held a number of intersessional meetings and started an intensive consultation process with all interested stakeholders (Member States, United Nations entities and specialized organizations, international and regional organizations, and civil society) to ensure an adequate, inclusive and effective preparatory process. To facilitate that consultation process, a website was created (www.ungass2016.org) to enable global dialogue and to function as a resource tool for the Commission in its preparations for the special session.

7. At its reconvened fifty-seventh session, held from 3 to 5 December 2014, the Commission held a special segment on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016, at which Member States and other stakeholders discussed substantive and organizational matters in relation to the preparations for the special session. In its decision 57/2, the Commission decided that a "Board tasked by the Commission with the preparations for the special session would be elected based on the regional distribution of officers of the bureau of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission". In its decision 57/3, the Commission adopted a provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in March 2015, on preparations for the special session. (A summary of the deliberations and the text of Commission decisions 57/2 and 57/3 are contained in document E/2014/28/Add.1-E/CN.7/2014/16/Add.1.)

8. The special segment on the preparations for the special session, held on the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, was convened during the first four days of the session, from 9 to 12 March 2015. A total of 131 States, as well as more than 65 non-governmental organizations and 15 international and intergovernmental organizations, participated. The special segment included a general debate on preparations for the special session (see annex I).

9. Further to the general debate, five interactive discussions were held on the following thematic areas: (a) demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health"); (b) supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime"); (c) cross-cutting issues: drugs

and human rights, youth, women, children and communities; (d) cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three international drug control conventions; and strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation; (e) alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented, balanced drug control policy; and addressing socioeconomic issues. Members of the Board tasked by the Commission with the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 chaired the interactive discussions, and presented a summary of the outcome of their respective discussions at the closing session of the special segment (see annex II).

10. During its fifty-eighth session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 58/8, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", which consisted of two parts. In the first part (operative paragraphs 1-5), the Commission agreed on organizational arrangements for the period leading up to and during the "special segment on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016" that would be held on the occasion of the reconvened fifty-eighth session of the Commission in December 2015 and on the occasion of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission in March 2016. The second part of resolution 58/8 (operative para. 6) was a stand-alone resolution that the Commission decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Assembly. It contained recommended modalities for the special session itself, including proposed dates (19-21 April 2016) and format (a general debate and five interactive multi-stakeholder round tables focusing on the same themes as those dealt with during the interactive discussions at the March 2015 session), as well as provisions on the preparation by the Commission of a "short, substantive, concise and action-oriented document comprising a set of operational recommendations", to be recommended for adoption at the special session.

11. Also at its fifty-eighth session, the Commission adopted decision 58/14, entitled "Provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the reconvened fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", and decision 58/15, entitled "Preliminary provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016". (More detailed information on the special segments on the preparations for the 2016 special session, as well as the text of Commission resolution 58/8, including the draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Assembly, and Commission decisions 58/14 and 58/15, can be found in document E/2015/28-E/CN.7/2015/15.)

Annex I

General debate on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

1. At the 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 9 March 2015, the Commission held the general debate of its special segment, on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.

2. Statements were made by the representatives of Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Bolivia (Plurinational State of), New Zealand, Afghanistan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Ghana, Australia, Mexico, Portugal, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Uruguay, France, Kyrgyzstan, Spain, the Philippines, Japan, Ecuador, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Poland, Sweden, China, Austria, Thailand, Peru, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Algeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Namibia, El Salvador, Canada, Costa Rica, Norway, Italy, Morocco, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, Hungary, Switzerland, Cuba, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar and the Republic of Korea.[1]

3. Statements were also made by the observers for the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, the Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group) of the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States. The observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta also made a statement.

4. It was noted that, despite progress made, the world drug problem continued to pose challenges for the international community and should be addressed on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility.

5. Many speakers reaffirmed their commitment to the achievement of the targets and goals set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and the objectives set out in the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

6. Several speakers emphasized that the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 was an important milestone on the way to 2019 and would be a unique and valuable opportunity to take stock of achievements and challenges encountered in addressing the world drug problem and to discuss regional realities, new approaches and emerging trends in an open and transparent format.

7. Speakers reaffirmed that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations organ with the prime responsibility for drug control matters, should

[1] Owing to time constraints, some of the statements mentioned were only made available on the website of the Commission.

continue to lead the preparatory process for the special session, in coordination with the President of the General Assembly.

8. Support was expressed for the proposal of holding a three-day special session and the organization of interactive, high-level round tables in parallel with the general debate, with the involvement of all stakeholders, including the scientific community and civil society. It was noted that any outcome prepared by the Commission for adoption at the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 2016 should be short and concise. The idea of reflecting the salient points raised during the high-level round tables in a Chair's summary was welcomed.

9. Many speakers expressed appreciation for efforts undertaken by the Commission to ensure an inclusive preparatory process for the special session and emphasized the importance of the effective involvement in that process of all relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community, national parliaments and civil society. The importance of actively and meaningfully engaging civil society was highlighted and the establishment of and contributions by the civil society task force and the scientific network were welcomed.

10. Many speakers emphasized the need to safeguard as well as to fully and adequately implement the three international drug control conventions, which continued to be the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

11. Some speakers noted that the current drug control policies had not yielded the expected results in terms of reducing supply and demand and that new approaches were needed. Several speakers stressed that any new approaches should be implemented in the framework of the three international drug control conventions. Concerns regarding decriminalization and legalization were raised by a number of speakers.

12. The need for an evidence-based, balanced, integrated and multidisciplinary approach in relation to supply and demand reduction strategies, in full compliance with the three international drug control conventions, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law, was highlighted.

13. Several speakers mentioned the importance of discussing the proportionality of sentences and alternatives to incarceration and, in a wider framework, the importance of the promotion of drug policies based on respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights. Several speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. Other speakers noted that national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected and that sentencing for drug-related offences should be determined by the national legislation of States.

14. It was stressed that a balanced approach to the world drug problem should take into account that drug addiction was a health problem and that national drug demand reduction strategies should include primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery and social reintegration. A number of speakers noted the need to introduce and implement harm reduction measures. Other speakers stressed that, as part of a balanced approach to addressing the world drug problem, law enforcement measures should also be maintained.

15. The importance of ensuring the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion and abuse, was emphasized by many speakers.

16. It was underlined that the international community should undertake efforts to prevent the adverse effects of drug-related violence on societies and communities. The need to address poverty, unemployment and social marginalization in the context of sustainable alternative development programmes was stressed.

17. Several speakers drew attention to integrated and sustainable crop control strategies and highlighted the importance of alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development programmes, as part of the broader economic development agenda. The need to strengthen regional and international cooperation to support alternative development programmes, while taking into account the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, was highlighted by a number of speakers.

18. Speakers called for the enhancement of regional and international cooperation in order to counter the illicit cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, on the basis of the three international drug control conventions as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The need to counter new and emerging challenges, including by providing, upon request, support to law enforcement authorities by strengthening the exchange of information and by enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation, was noted.

19. The growing links between drug trafficking and corruption, trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and other forms of organized crime, as well as, in some cases, money-laundering and terrorism, were noted by several speakers.

20. The threat posed by synthetic drugs and the emergence of new psychoactive substances was highlighted by many speakers, as was the need to strengthen, in response, measures and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.

21. Support was expressed for the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the leading entity in the United Nations system for assisting Member States in countering the world drug problem. UNODC was requested to continue mobilizing resources for the delivery of technical assistance and for enhancing, upon request, the capacities of States, including in the fields of crime and drug prevention, law enforcement, forensic laboratories and training of personnel.

Annex II

Interactive discussions on high-level segments to be held during the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Interactive discussion on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health")

The interactive discussion on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health"), held on 10 March, was presided over by Pedro Luis Moitinho de Almeida (Portugal) and led by the following panellists: Tawfik Zid (Tunisia), Jose Marlowe S. Pedregosa (Philippines), Jože Hren (Slovenia), Roberto Campa (Mexico), Michael Botticelli (United States), Lochan Naidoo (International Narcotics Control Board), Shekhar Saxena (World Health Organization (WHO)) and Diederik Lohman (Human Rights Watch).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

The importance of a comprehensive, evidence-based and health-centred approach to drug use disorders was highlighted.

Speakers emphasized that a wide and comprehensive range of effective strategies for drug prevention, early intervention and treatment existed and that action needed to be taken at all levels by Governments, international organizations and civil society to expand the coverage, quality, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes.

Speakers emphasized that prevention of drug use based on science and targeting the individual, as well as targeting social vulnerabilities, remained the cornerstone of drug demand reduction efforts, by supporting children, young people, families and communities, particularly those most at risk. Reference was made to factors such as poverty, social exclusion, stigmatization and a lack of prospects that placed people at risk of using drugs.

The availability of good-quality drug dependence treatment services that were voluntary, based on scientific evidence and medical standards and integrated into a public health approach, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of people suffering from drug disorders and dependence, were recognized as essential.

Speakers noted that the stigmatization of people who suffered from drug use disorders should be addressed, with a special focus on young people and women. It was noted that, instead of being punished, people who used drugs should be provided with integrated health and social care, treatment, reintegration and recovery-oriented services. The need to train medical professionals on how to address substance use disorders and on the use of medications to treat addiction was mentioned.

It was also mentioned that gaps in science remained, notably regarding the treatment of non-opioid users.

Four areas of focus for drug demand reduction strategies were proposed: (a) cost; (b) control; (c) the building of awareness; and (d) the use of effective models of intervention. It was noted that drug demand reduction strategies should be adapted to new challenges posed by new psychoactive drugs, cannabis addiction and patients with treatment needs for multiple diagnoses.

Some speakers noted that, in order to reduce HIV and hepatitis C infection rates among injecting drug users, harm reduction programmes, in particular needle and syringe programmes, opioid substitution treatment, voluntary HIV counselling and testing and antiretroviral therapy, should be implemented. Some speakers also noted the need to develop and implement evidence-based measures to address HIV and hepatitis C among non-injecting stimulant (cocaine, crack and amphetamine-type stimulants) users.

A number of speakers made reference to the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS, in which Member States had made a commitment to working towards reducing transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs by 50 per cent by 2015, and underlined that that target was likely to be missed. The importance of the role of UNODC as a convening agency of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in supporting countries in the post-2015 era with regard to reducing HIV transmission among people who use drugs and people in prisons was stressed.

Several speakers recognized that there was a high degree of discrepancy between high-income countries on the one hand and low- and middle-income countries on the other in terms of the availability of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for pain management and palliative care, and noted that such availability was an obligation for Governments under the three international drug control conventions and international human rights standards and norms, and as part of a balanced approach to supply and demand reduction. Particular reference was made by some speakers to the currently inadequate availability of psychotropic substances controlled under the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 that were used for the treatment of serious diseases. It was noted that adequate availability must be balanced with measures to prevent the misuse, abuse and diversion of such substances.

Interactive discussion on supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime")

The interactive discussion on supply reduction and related measures, responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime"), held on 10 March, was presided over by Reza Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran) and led by the following panellists: Rashmi Verma (India), Evika Siliņa (Latvia), Markel Iván Mora (Panama), Paul Griffiths (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction) and Ross Bell (New Zealand Drug Foundation).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

It was emphasized that no single approach could resolve the illicit drug problem and that a balanced and sustained effort at the international level was required to achieve successful results. Reference was made to the supply reduction measures contained in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Speakers highlighted the need to strengthen law enforcement cooperation at the regional and international levels, including meaningful cross-border cooperation and judicial cooperation, such as for extradition and mutual legal assistance.

It was noted that alternative development efforts had yielded good results, based on the principle of shared responsibility, supported by strong cooperation at the international level, including through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. The importance of addressing the challenges faced by farmers following the eradication of crops was highlighted. The need to address the root causes of criminality linked to the manufacture and trafficking of drugs was also mentioned, as was the importance of strengthening development and stability in source and transit countries through enhanced partnerships.

The successful implementation of sentencing reform resulting in both decreased levels of incarceration and crime was mentioned, and the need for proportionality of punishment was stressed. In that regard, some speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty, including for drug-related offences.

Some speakers noted that the traditional supply reduction performance indicators for law enforcement, such as quantities seized and the number of arrests, did not completely address the complex nature of the world drug problem and suggested using additional indicators covering further dimensions of supply reduction, such as tracing financial flows, or including the impact of drug control measures on illicit drug demand, in evaluating policies and strategies.

Some speakers highlighted the importance of tracing illicit financial flows generated by drug trafficking and emphasized the need for financial investigation training to combat money-laundering.

Some speakers noted a connection between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, including terrorism financing and money-laundering, while other speakers noted that that phenomenon was confined to only some parts of the world.

Some speakers noted that the Internet was increasingly being misused by organized criminal groups to facilitate drug trafficking and highlighted the need for programmes that supported capacity-building for investigating and prosecuting such crimes.

Many speakers recognized the growing threat and global nature of new psychoactive substances, emphasizing the need for international cooperation to address the problem and its relevance for the 2016 special session. To address the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances, speakers emphasized the importance of information-sharing at the regional and international levels, of improving the forensic capacity of laboratories to identify new psychoactive substances, with the guidance and cooperation of UNODC, and of the need for prioritization of the most

harmful substances, based on health risks and dependency potential. In that regard, it was proposed that the provisional scheduling of substances and scheduling based on the similarity principle be considered.

The need to maintain effective control over precursor chemicals and pre-precursors and to monitor and prevent diversion from licit sources was highlighted, as was the importance of using information technologies for real-time information exchange to identify trends in illicit manufacturing and trafficking.

The need to address existing challenges in reducing the illicit supply of controlled drugs within the framework of the international drug control conventions was stressed. It was mentioned by several speakers that innovative approaches could be identified within that framework.

Interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities

The interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities, held on 11 March, was presided over by Károly Dán (Hungary) and led by the following panellists: Ahmed Alfares (Saudi Arabia), Juan Carlos Molina (Argentina), Ruth Dreifuss (Switzerland) and Kristina Sperkova (IOGT International).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Speakers highlighted the importance of and their commitment to human rights, such as the right to life and health, in addressing the world drug problem.

Several speakers underlined that comprehensive health-centred and rights-based approaches, focusing on the individual and with a special focus on vulnerable groups, such as women and children, should be an integral part of drug demand reduction strategies.

The need to address obstacles to development and underlying socioeconomic issues, such as poverty, violence and social exclusion, by providing, inter alia, equal employment and education opportunities, was mentioned. It was noted that sustainable development and human rights issues should be given due consideration at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016. A reference to the right to development was also made.

It was stressed that individuals with drug use disorders required quality, widely available and accessible drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes, as well as access to health care and to evidence-based HIV prevention programmes. The importance of measures to prevent negative health and social consequences, based on scientific evidence, was noted as well. Some speakers also noted that drug demand reduction measures should be based on the three international drug control conventions, while taking full account of all applicable human rights.

The importance of ensuring adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, was highlighted.

Reference was made to the need to implement gender-sensitive policies and measures tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of female drug users and drug offenders and to mitigating the negative impact on their families.

It was underlined that drug control policies and measures should be implemented in line with the best interests of the child. That included measures to prevent drug abuse and involvement in drug offences by children, and appropriate responses by health-care and child protection services. Reference was made to the importance of early interventions, prevention and awareness-raising measures targeting young people, families and communities. The rights of victims of trafficking in drugs and the impact of social media on drug-related issues were also highlighted.

In the context of criminal justice measures, the importance of proportionality of sentencing and of alternatives to sanctions and imprisonment for non-violent drug-related offences was stressed. A number of speakers mentioned that the stigmatization and punishment of drug users had negative effects and that alternatives to criminal justice sanctions should be used to promote their recovery, social reintegration and treatment.

Several speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. Other speakers noted that national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected. It was stressed that different countries and regions had adopted a wide range of approaches, to which due consideration should be given. The importance of taking into account cultural and traditional specificities when implementing drug policies was mentioned.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of cooperation in addressing drug-related issues at the regional and international levels, and of partnerships with the private sector and civil society. The need for inter-agency coordination and collaboration, including between agencies dealing with health, justice, law enforcement and children and young people, with a view to ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach to addressing the world drug problem, was stressed.

Interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation

The interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation, held on 11 March, was presided over by Khaled Abdel-Rahman Shamaa (Egypt) and led by the following panellists: Tingfang Wu (China), Konstantin Gobrusenko (Russian Federation), Jose Moldiz Mercado (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Pier Vincenzo Piazza (France) and Lisa Sanchez (Transform Drug Policy Foundation).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Speakers called for a humane approach to addressing the world drug problem, while emphasizing that innovative approaches could be implemented within the framework of the international drug control conventions.

Some speakers stressed that innovative drug control policies and new legislation were needed to address the specific and changing realities of the drug control situation, which differed between regions, and advocated for an open discussion on approaches that included the decriminalization of drug use and other efforts to reduce potential negative consequences of current policies. Other speakers took note of new challenges and approaches, while emphasizing their continuing commitment to the full implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and the international drug control conventions, which remained the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

Some speakers stressed that different countries and regions had adopted a wide range of approaches to which due consideration should be given. Reference was made to the importance of the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Some speakers also noted the importance of taking into account cultural and traditional specificities when implementing drug policies.

The importance of placing the human being at the centre of drug control policies was emphasized. Reference was made to new challenges, such as the increase in consumption levels, as well as to the need to focus on alternative development, including preventive alternative development, and to improve the lives of people in areas affected by illicit drug cultivation. Also mentioned was the importance of continuing to address poverty and unemployment, as they were conducive to social marginalization and were consequently exploited by drug traffickers.

The need for a scientific approach to understanding and treating drug addiction was emphasized. A few speakers reported on innovative pharmacological treatments available for cannabis addiction and hepatitis C. States were urged to allocate additional resources to research and to make drug addiction treatment a priority.

Some speakers highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation in the fight against money-laundering and for improved sharing of information. It was noted that the financial basis of the illegal drug trade should be studied in order to identify illicit financial flows linked to drug trafficking, which would allow for a better understanding of the impact of those flows on the economy.

Reference was made to the increasing use of modern equipment and to increased coordination among drug trafficking and terrorist networks. Speakers called for stronger capacity-building to better control sea routes and to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Speakers referred to the challenges posed by the increased use of the Internet, web systems and chat rooms for the purposes of sharing information on production methods and trafficking routes and ordering non-scheduled chemicals and new psychoactive substances. In that regard, delays in legislative developments and imbalances in the scope of control in different countries hindered effective action. Proposals were made for a strengthened regime to control new psychoactive substances and for increased cooperation across regions to effectively address the challenges posed by non-scheduled chemicals.

The importance of enhancing cooperation to address drug-related issues at the regional and international levels was stressed, as was the importance of partnerships with the private sector and civil society.

Interactive discussion on alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues

The interactive discussion on alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues, held on 11 March, was presided over by Jaime Alberto Cabal Sanclemente (Colombia) and led by the following panellists: Ahmadu Giade (Nigeria), Dispanadda Diskul (Thailand), Julio Garro Galvez (Peru), Daniel Brombacher (Germany) and Fay Watson (Europe against Drugs).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Several speakers stressed that poverty, lack of livelihood opportunities, vulnerability, lack of government presence, insecurity and lack of access to land were some of the key factors that fostered illicit crop cultivation. Those factors needed to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Speakers highlighted the importance and added value of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 in further assessing and advancing the issue of alternative development on the international agenda by promoting success stories relating to alternative development and viewing it from a development perspective. Speakers reiterated the importance of incorporating alternative development into the post-2015 development agenda and into sustainable development goals.

Some speakers highlighted the importance of implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and noted that not all policy decisions had been translated into work in the field.

A number of speakers highlighted that alternative development should be included in broader national development strategies and national drug control strategies.

Several speakers stressed that alternative development required a long-term sustainable integrated comprehensive approach, including the provision and improvement of infrastructure, roads, electricity, water and access to land, health, education and markets. The need to improve the capacity of States to implement alternative development programmes was noted.

International cooperation, including South-South cooperation, and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, local communities, national and local governments and the private sector were critical for ensuring successful alternative development programmes.

Several speakers noted that where alternative development had been implemented, a sustained reduction in illicit crop cultivation had taken place.

Speakers noted that, over the years, there had been a marked decrease in official development assistance allocated to alternative development, which had resulted in many farming communities not receiving development assistance.

Some speakers pointed to the need to extend the provision of alternative development to countries, particularly in Africa, where cannabis was cultivated, with a view to addressing poverty and vulnerability.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of market access and of establishing market links for alternative development products, stressing that the products needed to be of quality and competitive.

The importance of preventive alternative development and the need to share best practices and lessons learned on alternative development were highlighted.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of assessing the impact of alternative development not only through illicit crop cultivation estimates, but also through human development indicators, thus ensuring that alternative development was measured from the socioeconomic perspective of improving livelihoods.

Some speakers highlighted that alternative development must be designed with a human-centred approach in order to involve communities in all phases of project implementation.

Some speakers stressed the importance of ensuring the proper sequencing of alternative development, eradication and law enforcement activities when designing actions to combat illicit crop cultivation.

Several speakers welcomed the chapter on alternative development in the forthcoming World Drug Report 2015, noting that it could serve as an important element in guiding Member States in preparing for the deliberations at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016. The important role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and of UNODC in advancing work in the area of alternative development was mentioned.

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Seventieth session
Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 22 May 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and has the honour to refer to the candidature of the Republic of Korea for election to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2016-2018 term at the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the General Assembly in New York (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations would like to request the Office of the President of the General Assembly to have the present note and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

* A/70/50.

15-08237 (E) 110615

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Annex to the note verbale dated 22 May 2015 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of the Republic of Korea to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

I. Introduction

1. Having served as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2006 to 2011 and from 2013 to 2015, the Republic of Korea has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2016-2018 at the elections to be held during the seventieth session of the General Assembly in 2015.

2. The Republic of Korea firmly believes that the respect for human rights is indispensable for sustainable development. With lessons learned confirming such conviction, the Republic of Korea is committed to sharing its experience and making greater contributions to the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

3. The Republic of Korea has ratified and implemented the following seven core international human rights treaties and most of the Optional Protocols:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1979)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985) and its Optional Protocol (2006)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1990)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1990) and its Optional Protocol (1990)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and its Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2004)
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1995)
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2009).

4. The Republic of Korea has also ratified and implemented the following conventions: the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction and the Maritime Labour Convention of the International Labour Organization.

5. The Republic of Korea has sought to ensure the advancement of human rights for its minorities and the socially vulnerable in the following ways:

- Revision of laws concerning the protection of children and juveniles from sexual abuse and the punishment of sexual crimes (2013)

- Revision of the Child Welfare Act for better prevention of child abuse and protection of the rights of children and the enactment of relevant laws to prevent physical, sexual and psychological abuse of children and to ensure victims' access to justice and stronger punishment of the perpetrators (2014)
- Establishment of the National Action Plan in 2014 to provide a framework for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and its subsequent and related resolutions
- Drawing up comprehensive policy plans to protect vulnerable groups through the first basic plan for Children Policy for the period 2015-2019, the second basic plan for immigration policy for the period 2013-2017 and the fourth basic plan for women policy for the period 2013-2017).

6. The Republic of Korea underwent its second Universal Periodic Review in 2012 in an open and constructive manner, and conducted a review of the recommendations made during an interactive dialogue within the National Human Rights Policy Council. The accepted recommendations are incorporated into the second National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

7. The National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea was established in 2001 in compliance with the Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions. The Commission investigates instances of discrimination and human rights violations, provides access to remedies, promotes human rights education, raises awareness of human rights and provides human rights-related policy recommendations.

II. Pledges and commitments

8. In line with its dedication to the noble aim of promoting and protecting human rights, the Republic of Korea commits itself to further advancing human rights at the national level by:

(a) Upholding the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, with a strong commitment to human rights as a universal value;

(b) Implementing the provisions of the international human rights instruments at the national level and taking the following steps with respect to the withdrawal of reservations made to the human rights instruments in line with the recent advancement of human rights in the Republic of Korea, including legal amendments and institutional developments in a wide array of fields:

- Ratifying the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (The Palermo Protocol)
- Considering the withdrawal of its reservations to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 25, para. (e)) and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 21, para. (a))
- Considering the ratification of the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption
- Examining the possibility of becoming a party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances

- Examining the possibility of accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

(c) Strengthening the implementation of the second National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for the period 2012-2016, which covers 221 human rights-related obligations. The plan outlines the commitment of the Republic of Korea towards better human rights protection in line with its international human rights obligations. The third National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights for the period 2017-2020 will be developed in 2016 in close cooperation with relevant stakeholders;

(d) Strengthening efforts to promote and protect the rights of minorities and the socially vulnerable, women, children and youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, victims of crime, refugees and persons with a history of illness;

(e) Enhancing cooperation and partnership with civil society for the advancement of human rights and good governance;

(f) Strengthening human rights education and training in various fields such as schools, universities, public offices, military bases and enterprises to enhance public awareness and thereby incorporate human rights into the mainstream in all sectors of society.

9. In line with its aim of promoting and protecting human rights, the Republic of Korea commits itself to further advancing human rights at the international level by:

(a) Closely cooperating with the international community to advance human rights and address human rights violations around the world, with a strong commitment to promoting and protecting human rights as a universal value;

(b) Cooperating with other Member States in their implementation of human rights obligations through various mechanisms such as technical cooperation, exchanges of experts and the sharing of experiences and best practices;

(c) Cooperating at the bilateral level as well as through the United Nations system to strengthen democracy, good governance, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(d) Promoting and consolidating democracy by providing technical expertise and financial support to countries requesting assistance in building democratic institutions and by playing an active role in the work of the Community of Democracies as a member of its governing council;

(e) Incorporating a human rights perspective into its development cooperation policies and programmes, which can contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and good governance in partner countries.

10. The Republic of Korea will contribute to the work of the Human Rights Council by:

(a) Playing an active role in human rights advocacy around the world by constructively participating in a wide range of discussions to promote all aspects of human rights;

(b) Remaining constructively engaged in the activities of the Human Rights Council and supporting the fulfilment of its mandate and functions;

(c) Continuing its close collaboration with other Member States to make the Human Rights Council an efficient and effective body that responds to urgent situations of human rights violations in a prompt and effective manner;

(d) Cooperating with the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, to which the Republic of Korea has extended a standing invitation, by rendering its full support for such a visit;

(e) Strengthening its efforts to further improve the effectiveness of the Universal Periodic Review through constructive engagement in it and through dialogue with States under review;

(f) Cooperating and working closely with human rights treaty bodies, intensifying efforts to implement their recommendations and ensuring the timely submission of national reports in full compliance with the human rights instruments to which the Republic of Korea is a party;

(g) Rendering its full support to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its mandate to elevate standards of human rights observance and advance human rights on the ground;

(h) Contributing to the effective operation of a field-based structure of the OHCHR in the Republic of Korea, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 25/25 on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

United Nations A/70/89

General Assembly

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Seventieth session
Item 114 (e) of the preliminary list*
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 1 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to recall that Belgium has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2016-2018 at elections to be held during the seventieth session of the General Assembly. I enclose herewith a copy of the voluntary pledges and commitments of the Government of Belgium for the promotion and protection of human rights, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 114 (e) of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Bénédicte **Frankinet**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/70/50.

15-09012 (E) 170615

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Annex to the letter dated 1 June 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Candidature of Belgium to the Human Rights Council, 2016-2018

Voluntary pledges and commitments pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

Introduction

1. Belgium contributes worldwide to the promotion and protection of human rights and adheres to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The promotion and protection of human rights is an integral part of the national and foreign policy of Belgium. Human rights are fully mainstreamed in all actions that it takes on the international scene, on the basis of the premise that human rights are essential for respecting the human dignity of each individual.

2. As one of the founding members of the United Nations, Belgium has a track record of promoting and protecting human rights in a multilateral environment, both in the universal context of the United Nations and as a founding member of the Council of Europe. Belgium served as Chair of the Council of Europe from November 2014 to May 2015 and has consistently advocated a strong role for regional organizations and arrangements in the promotion and protection of human rights. As a founding member of the European Union, Belgium is committed to human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Those values are embedded in the treaties of the European Union and are an essential part of its international action.

3. The long-time commitment of Belgium to human rights is demonstrated by, among others, its recent membership in the Human Rights Council during the period 2009-2012, the Commission on the Status of Women during the periods 1970-1980 and 1995-2015 and the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council during the period 2011-2014. Belgium is eager to cooperate with other States Members of the United Nations to improve the situation of human rights worldwide.

4. The foreign policy of Belgium aims to enhance the positive correlation among peace and security, development and human rights, which are the basic pillars of the United Nations. Belgium is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights as essential conditions to achieve peace, security and development. As a State member of the European Union and on a national basis, it is one of the major contributors to international development cooperation.

5. To contribute actively to international efforts to ensure better respect for human rights and to increase the effectiveness of its action in the field of human rights, Belgium is applying for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2016-2018. Since the establishment of the Council, Belgium has consistently participated in its activities in a constructive manner. It wishes to contribute further to a dynamic and effective Council.

Active participation in all activities of the Council

6. The Council is responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. Belgium will continue to work for a strong and effective Council and for the universality and indivisibility of human rights. Belgium will ensure that the Council, in its role in addressing human rights violations, will deal with both country situations and thematic issues in accordance with developments on the ground.

7. Belgium considers a robust system of special procedures to be an excellent tool to allow the Council to address human rights situations on the ground. It will make every effort to guarantee the integrity and independence of those special procedures.

8. Belgium will continue its active cooperation with the special procedures, in accordance with its standing invitation issued in 2001. Belgium has received the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery (2015), the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent (2006), the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000) and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers (1997). Belgium will, as in the past, reply promptly to communications by Special Rapporteurs and follow up actively on their recommendations.

9. Belgium will continue its full engagement with the universal periodic review mechanism and ensure an effective follow-up to recommendations as accepted during its review. Both the preparation of its next universal periodic review report and the follow-up of the recommendations will be carried out in close consultation with civil society.

10. Moreover, Belgium will continue to play an active part in enabling the universal periodic review to remain an efficient and reliable instrument of the Council that contributes to specific improvements in the human rights situation in every State Member of the United Nations. In this context, Belgium will do its utmost all efforts to consolidate this constructive and transparent dialogue between all States, with the input of relevant expert bodies in the United Nations human rights system and of civil society.

11. Belgium will, in accordance with both its internal policies and legislation and its foreign policy, pay due attention to civil society and ensure that it continue to play an active role in the functioning of the Council.

Supporting and strengthening the other organs of the United Nations human rights system

12. Belgium is committed to mainstreaming human rights throughout the United Nations.

13. The Third Committee of the General Assembly must, through its activities and along with the Council, continue to contribute dynamically to the promotion and protection of human rights. Consequently, Belgium will continue to support to this universal organ in order to treat both thematic and geographic issues so as to achieve progress in the implementation of human rights standards.

14. Belgium has supported the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) since its creation and will continue to do so. The

independence and the impartiality of OHCHR must be safeguarded, given that these are essential conditions to enable it to promote and protect human rights. Most of the contributions of Belgium during the past decade were not earmarked and, where there was any earmarking, it was light, in full respect of the autonomy of OHCHR. Belgium will continue to provide contributions to activities aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights, including contributions to other relevant funds of the United Nations.

15. Belgium reiterates its strong support for the treaty bodies, which are at the heart of the global human rights framework and play a fundamental role in promoting and protecting human rights at the national level. Belgium attaches great importance to their effective functioning. It commits itself to further encouraging the universal ratification and full implementation of major human rights treaties. Belgium will continue its active cooperation with the treaty body committees through the timely submission of its periodic reports, by entering into interactive dialogue at the oral presentation of its reports and by actively implementing the committees' recommendations. Belgium does not have any overdue reports at present and has established a national mechanism to ensure the regular follow-up of treaty body recommendations.

16. The third report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the fifth report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the combined sixteenth to nineteenth reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the first report on the implementation of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the first report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the seventh report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women have recently been examined by the respective committees.

17. In this context, Belgium attaches great importance to an open and constructive dialogue with civil society.

Stronger action in the area of human rights

18. Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law are long-standing priorities of Belgium. It is a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and is one of the main initiators of a proposal for a multilateral treaty for mutual legal assistance and extradition for domestic prosecution of the most serious international crimes. At the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in September 2012, Belgium reaffirmed its commitment to the rule of law by making 17 pledges.

19. Respect for the physical integrity of every person will receive special attention. Together with other main sponsors, Belgium will continue to put the question of the death penalty on the agenda of the Council to trigger a substantive debate on the issue from a human rights perspective and to move forward on the goal of universal abolition.

20. Enhancing equality and countering discrimination, with particular attention to the rights of women, children and vulnerable persons, remain a major focus of the policies of Belgium, both nationally and internationally.

21. Promoting decent work and social protection for all and respect for international labour standards are part of this policy. Inclusive economic growth is a tool to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

22. Addressing the scourge of racism forms another aspect of this policy. All potential victims of racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance must benefit from the same attention and protection. Following its active participation in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 and its close involvement in the Durban Review Conference in Geneva in 2009, Belgium was represented at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on 22 September 2011 in New York to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

23. Along with Slovenia, Belgium introduced its biennial resolution on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. By doing so, Belgium sought to draw attention to the importance of the Convention, which celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2015, and to promote its implementation.

24. Freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press, is a key component of any democratic society and of great importance to Belgium. Freedom of expression is essential for the fulfilment and enjoyment of a wide range of other human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. Both freedoms play an important role in efforts to combat all forms of intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

25. Convinced of the importance and added value of well-developed regional human rights systems, which should reinforce universal human rights standards, Belgium will continue to advocate within the Council in favour of regional organizations or arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights and of advancing cooperation between international and regional human rights mechanisms.

26. Respect for human rights in the efforts to combat terrorism is crucial. Belgium remains committed to ensuring that its own national measures safeguard the fundamental rights of the individual. Belgium will also continue its efforts to ensure that international efforts will be undertaken with the full respect of human rights.

27. The development cooperation activity of Belgium follow a rights-based approach to development, which emphasizes the universality, indivisibility and inalienability of human rights and the principles of participation and inclusivity in decision-making, non-discrimination and equality, transparency and accountability.

Strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights at the national level

28. Belgium will honour all its commitments resulting from the ratification of human rights conventions and acknowledges that, in this respect, more progress can be made at the national level.

29. Belgium ratified the major human rights conventions[a] and is doing everything possible to ratify the following human rights instruments as soon as possible: the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), of ILO and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). In addition, Belgium is taking steps to accept as soon as possible the amendment to article 8 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the amendments to articles 17 (7) and 18 (5) of the Convention against Torture.

30. Belgium actively contributed to the elaboration of the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, which it ratified on 20 and 30 May 2014, respectively.

31. To enforce its commitment to protecting human rights, Belgium has adopted or is developing national action plans that provide terms of reference for outlining its policy, such as:

(a) The first national action plan to implement the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which should be finalized in 2015. Through this action plan, the Government wishes to reinforce its commitment to the Guiding Principles and the underlying "Protect, Respect and Remedy" framework;

(b) The second national action plan, entitled "Women, peace and security" for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which was adopted in July 2013. One of its priority objectives is to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including sexual violence;

(c) The sixth national action plan on gender-based violence for the period 2015-2019, which is being developed in line with the Istanbul Convention. It will focus on partner violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so-called honour-related violence, which will be addressed by an approach on the basis of an integrated policy, prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership;

(d) The first action plans tackling homophobic and transphobic discrimination on the one hand, and homophobic and transphobic violence on the other, which were both adopted in 2013;

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[a] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1983), first Optional Protocol (1994), second Optional Protocol, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty (1998), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1983), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1975), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985), Optional Protocol to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2004), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991), Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002), Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2006), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1999), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto (2009) and International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2011).

(e) A third poverty reduction plan for the period 2015-2019, which is in full preparation. Although Belgium is privileged from an economic and social development point of view, the plan will acknowledge that not all citizens benefit to the same extent from that prosperity. It will aim to offer everyone the opportunity to live a dignified life, as guaranteed by article 23 of the Constitution;

(f) A third national action plan to combat trafficking in human beings and human smuggling, which will build upon the specific and pragmatic approach of the previous action plan. Since 1995, an interdepartmental coordination platform has coordinated the various initiatives taken within the framework of efforts to combat trafficking and smuggling in human beings.

32. Belgium has established national institutions with a wide mandate in the promotion of, the respect for and the protection of human rights, such as the Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, the Institute for the Equality of Women and Men and the National Commission of the Rights of the Child. At present, the Government is establishing a national human rights institution, in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles).